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Surveying the damage



Floodwaters surround buildings on the southwestern side of Hamburg, Iowa, on Sunday.

RYAN SODERLIN, OMAHA (NEB.) WORLD-HERALD/AP



Z LONG, OMAHA (NEB.) WORLD-HERALD/AP

Bases largely underwater after massive flooding in Midwest

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

Offutt Air Force Base is operating with only essential personnel and the National Guard's Camp Ashland is completely closed as floodwaters remain high at both Nebraska bases from massive flooding over the weekend after rivers breached several levees following heavy rain and snowmelt upstream.

Military officials at the bases said Monday that they are surveying damage as they wait for the water to recede, which isn't expected until Thursday.

Flooding began Friday at Offutt, which is near Bellevue, peaked Sunday evening and flooded about one-third of the base. Overnight, the water receded only about a foot, Col. Michael Manion, commander of the 55th Wing Command, which is headquartered at

SEE MIDWEST ON PAGE 6

Luke Thomas and Air Force Tech. Sgt. Vanessa Vidaurre look at a flooded portion of Offutt Air Force Base on Sunday in Bellevue, Neb. Hundreds of people were evacuated from their homes in Nebraska and Iowa as levees succumbed to the rush of water. Flooding also was reported in Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

Police chief: Suspect in deadly Dutch tram shooting detained

By ALEKSANDAR FURTULA
AND MIKE CORDER
Associated Press

UTRECHT, Netherlands — Utrecht's police chief said the man suspected of killing three people and wounding five others on a tram in this Dutch city had been detained.

■ This story was still developing at press time. Go to stripes.com for the latest details.

Dutch authorities had said the shooting could have been connected to terrorism.

At the end of a news conference Monday

evening, chief Rob van Bree told reporters, "I just heard that the suspect we were hunting has been arrested."

Further details were not immediately available.

The shooting took place on a streetcar Monday morning in what the mayor said appeared to be a terrorist attack, touch-

ing off a manhunt as heavily armed officers with dogs zeroed in on an apartment building. Authorities immediately raised the threat alert for the area to the highest level, and Dutch military police tightened security at airports and key buildings.

SEE SHOOTING ON PAGE 12

PACIFIC

Chinese ship maneuver won't alter US sail-bys

By JIM GOMEZ
Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — The U.S. Navy won't alter its so-called freedom of navigation sail-bys in the disputed South China Sea and has pressed ahead with such operations despite a dangerous maneuver by a Chinese navy ship against an American destroyer, a senior U.S. Navy commander said Monday.

Vice Adm. Phillip Sawyer, commander of the U.S. 7th Fleet, told reporters in Manila that Washington protested that "unprofessional behavior" by the Chinese ship, which maneuvered very close to the USS Decatur as the latter sailed closely by a Chinese-occupied island in the Spratlys in September.

"No, it's not going to change

where we do our freedom of navigation operations," Sawyer said when asked if the Sept. 30 incident off Gaven Reef would change such U.S. Navy operations. Several such sail-bys have been undertaken by American naval ships since that close encounter in the disputed waters, he said.

"It was concerning because the ships got too close," Sawyer said, adding that U.S. officials have voiced "our displeasure with what we consider to be unprofessional behavior."

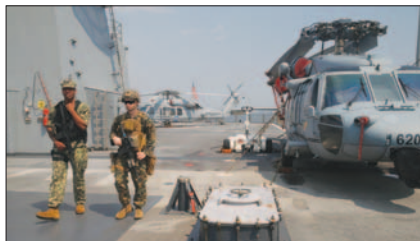
The USS Decatur had sailed within 12 nautical miles of Gaven Reef when a Chinese destroyer dangerously approached within 45 yards of the bow of the U.S. Navy ship, which changed course to prevent a collision. The Decatur was also warned to leave the area, U.S. Pacific Fleet officials

said at the time.

China said the Luoyang, a Chinese missile destroyer, was deployed to identify the U.S. warship and drive it away near Chinese territory. Beijing protested the Decatur's action as provocative.

One of seven disputed reefs transformed by China into militarily fortified islands in recent years, Gaven is claimed by China, the Philippines, Vietnam and Taiwan. Malaysia and Brunei also have claims in the South China Sea.

While Washington has no claims to the strategic waterway, it has declared that freedom of navigation and the peaceful resolution of the disputes are in the U.S. national interest. The U.S. has also questioned China's expansive claims, bringing it into a collision course with Beijing.



BULLY MARQUEZ/AP

U.S. Marines patrol the USS Blue Ridge as it anchors off Manila Bay, Philippines, for a port call on Wednesday, U.S. 7th Fleet commander Vice Adm. Phillip Sawyer says the Navy will continue its sail-bys in the South China Sea despite China's opposition.

The U.S. Navy will continue freedom of navigation sail-bys and patrols in the South China Sea and elsewhere "until there are no excessive maritime claims throughout the world," said Sawyer, who spoke onboard the USS Blue Ridge, which arrived in Manila on Thursday for a visit after sailing through the South China Sea.

China has long been wary of the U.S. military presence in the disputed waterway and has asked

Washington not to meddle in a purely Asian dispute. The U.S. has insisted the routine patrols and exercises it has carried out with allies in the region for more than 70 years has helped foster the regional stability that has allowed many Asian countries to prosper economically.

Sawyer said the Navy's joint or multilateral exercises with American allies were common in the region and elsewhere.

Workers safely remove unexploded bomb found in Iwakuni

By JAMES BOLINGER
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan — A World War II-era American bomb was removed safely Sunday morning from a school construction site in Iwakuni by the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force.

Explosive ordnance disposal

technicians defused the bomb in two hours, an Iwakuni City crisis-management official said. The 500-pound bomb was discovered Jan. 7 at the construction site about 1.25 miles north of MCAS Iwakuni.

Iwakuni-based Marines and sailors were directed to shelter in place from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. if they were near the construction site, which is close to the Iwakuni

train station.

More than 1,000 people living within a 200-meter radius of the site were evacuated for the duration of the morning, the official said. The evacuation order was lifted at 11:17 a.m.

The bomb was approximately 3.5 feet long and more than a foot in diameter, according to an Iwakuni City press release. Officials believe it was dropped dur-

ing an air raid Aug. 14, 1945.

"It's not often that we find unexploded bombs," the official said. It is customary in Japan for government spokesmen not to identify themselves by name when giving statements to the press.

The city last disposed of a World War II-era bomb about 30 years ago.

"Iwakuni was attacked by a large air raid, but it was mainly

around the [Iwakuni] station and they are not scattered around the city," the official said.

World War II munitions are not commonly found near Iwakuni. Some were discovered during the construction of Iwakuni station, he said.

"Most of them were removed soon after the war," he said.

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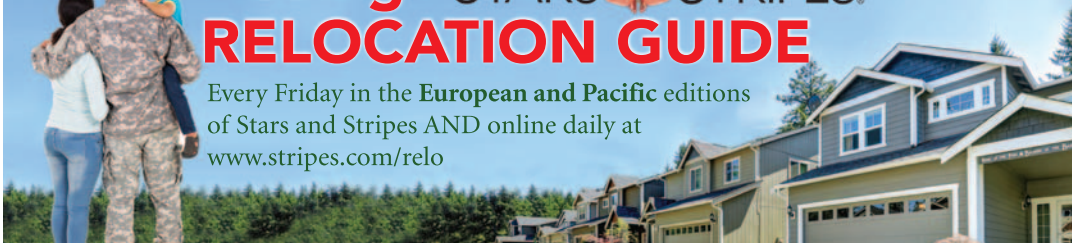
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MILITARY

Woman battling cancer seeks genetic match

German patient who needs a stem cell transplant appeals to military community to help find donor

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — A German woman in need of a stem cell transplant to save her life is appealing to the international community, including Americans living in the Kaiserslautern area, for help in finding a donor.

Astrid, a mother of two young boys from Frankfurt, was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia last fall after going to the doctor for a sore throat. Doctors have said her best chance of beating the less than 50 percent odds of surviving the aggressive blood cancer is a stem cell transplant, said her family friend, Sara.

Astrid, 41, is facing an uphill battle in finding a genetic match, given her mixed African and Caucasian ethnicity, Sara said, speaking on Astrid's behalf. Both women requested only their first names be used to protect their families' privacy.

Their plea comes in an area where Defense Department personnel can easily register on base to become a bone marrow donor. However, officials say minorities are underrepresented in the department's globally accessible registry.

Less than 3 percent of all registered donors worldwide are of an ethnic mix, Sara said. Even fewer have African and Caucasian genes. Astrid needs to find a "genetic twin," someone who has the same genetic makeup, Sara said. "That hasn't been found yet."

Astrid's father was from Nigeria — belonging to the Igbo, one of the largest of all African ethnic groups.

"What we didn't know before this happened to Astrid is that ... 70 percent" of registered stem cell donors are Caucasian, Sara said.

"We just need to reach way, way, way more people, not just for Astrid but for everybody with similar backgrounds," she said, "because it can become a problem for everybody."

Astrid has appealed directly to residents of London, which has one of the biggest Nigerian communities outside of West Africa. Her supporters are also reaching out to the U.S. and broader public, Sara said, including to U.S. military personnel stationed in Germany.

The U.S. military cannot advise or endorse participation in the campaign to help Astrid, officials at Ramstein Air Base said. But DOD personnel, Coast Guardsmen and immediate family members in the Kaiserslautern area can easily register to become a stem cell or bone marrow donor for anyone in need because Ramstein is one of about 65 walk-in registration sites for the C.W. Bill Young Department of Defense Marrow Donor Program, also called Salute to Life.

Individuals between the ages of 18 and 60 in general good health may register through the program. On Ramstein, the 86th Medical Group oversees registration at the base medical clinic and has about 50 collection kits on hand, officials there said.

Registration can be completed in about seven minutes and doesn't cost anything, said Eddy Medina, the senior recruiter for the DOD marrow donor program. It involves filling out a form and having each cheek swabbed twice.

Once a kit arrives at the program's lab in Maryland, DNA is extracted from the swabs and analyzed for six different genes to determine the human leukocyte antigen typing — the markers found on most cells in the body. That information will be added to the registry, Medina said.

The DOD program partners with the National Marrow Donor Program, which is open to both civilian and military patients in need of a transplant. The national registry works with more than 50 other nations, increasing the pool of potential donors to more than 33 million.

"If you become a match, they'll ask you



Courtesy of help-astrid.com

Astrid is urging more people of mixed ethnic backgrounds to get registered as a stem cell donor as her desperate search for one continues.

if you want to go through the process of donating," Medina said. "They'll tell you the age of the person, the gender and the disease."

If a person agrees to donate and passes a blood test and physical, he or she is flown to the greater District of Columbia area for the procedure, which usually takes less than a week. Military personnel would work through their commander to get permission leave, while the DOD donor program — which receives funds from Congress — would cover the travel costs, Medina said.

More than 1 million DOD personnel are registered in the program's database, Medina said. Minorities, however, are not represented "as well as they should be" in the registry.

Individuals may also request a testing kit by mail at salutetolife.org or attend a registration drive. The next one overseas

is at Camp Zama, Japan, on March 25-29. Those not affiliated with the DOD may register at bethematch.org.

In Germany, people may register through DKMS, a charity that works with national stem cell registries to defeat blood cancer.

The best way to help Astrid, Sara said, is to get registered as a donor.

For Astrid, finding a match is a life-or-death prospect, Sara said.

She's undergone chemotherapy, but "getting a stem cell donation is her only chance of surviving this," Sara said. "They can try to buy her some time with the medicine but, ultimately, she will need a match or she will most likely die."

"She's also hoping that her case really raises awareness for this global problem," Sara said.

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Seattle VA hospital hopes to push frontiers in PTSD, TBI treatment

By HAL BERNTON
The Seattle Times

The VA Puget Sound Health Care System in Washington state has opened a \$121.6 million building to house researchers and offer mental health services for some 9,000 veterans. The showcase facility includes vaulted ceilings, sweeping views of the rugged Olympic Mountains and rooftop gardens that collect rainwater for reuse.

In a Friday dedication ceremony, officials hailed the project as a big step forward in taking care of the region's veterans. "It is also set some lofty goals for pushing the frontiers of medicine in traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, prosthetics and other fields."

"This is the future," said Dr. William Banks, an associate chief of staff at the VA Puget Sound Health Care System. "It is appropriate that this building is a green one, green like an emerald, because it is destined to be a crown jewel of VA research."

The Seattle hospital first opened in 1951 on 44 acres of Beacon Hill, with the last major expansion in 1985 when a patient care facility was added. Through the decades, the campus has emerged as a regional hub of a Puget Sound network that

"It is appropriate that this building is a green one, green like an emerald, because it is destined to be a crown jewel of VA research."

Dr. William Banks
associate chief of staff at the VA Puget Sound Health Care system

includes the American Lake campus south of Tacoma and seven clinics spread from Skagit to Lewis counties.

About 110,000 veterans are enrolled at the Puget Sound VA, and they made more than 1 million outpatient visits in 2018, according to VA officials.

Through the years, the Puget Sound VA also has emerged as the fifth-largest research program within the national Department of Veterans Affairs system. It has been a focal point for studying PTSD and head injuries from blasts, which took on increased urgency as veterans returned from the long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Dr. Elaine Peskind, a VA psychiatrist, has been recognized by the psych for her research into the effect of blast injuries on the brain, including the cerebellum, a part of the brain that is key to performing

a wide range of tasks including balance, walking and writing.

Peskind's office has been in a windowless basement on Beacon Hill, while other researchers have leased offices in buildings off campus. She will move into the new building.

Others who will have new quarters include researchers involved in Alzheimer's disease, genomics, substance abuse and lower limb prostheses. Researchers are experimenting with three-dimensional printing to develop custom-fit insoles that could be produced quickly and efficiently in the hospital, hopefully reducing the risk of diabetic patients developing ulcers and other injuries that require amputations.

The new building opened on schedule and with less than a 10 percent budget overrun, according to Keith Allen, the VA

Puget Sound Health Care System's deputy director.

But there were tense moments. At one point, funding for the final touches — toilet paper, soap dispensers and other essentials — appeared to dry up, according to Banks. Then a last-minute push secured the money to fully furnish the building.

This expansion of the Seattle VA campus comes at a pivotal time in the VA's history. The Trump administration — empowered by congressional legislation passed last year — is poised to expand options for veterans who seek health care services in their communities rather than going to VA providers.

This shift "will fundamentally transform VA health care," consolidating community care options into a single program that is easier for veterans, their families and providers to navigate, said Michael Murphy, a VA regional director who spoke at the Friday dedication.

Even with the expanding choices, mental health care services are expected to continue to be a big part of the care directly provided by the VA providers to veterans.

Currently, the Puget Sound VA network offers mental health care to about 24,000 veterans annually.

MILITARY



PHOTOS BY SEAN MORTON/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Above: Pilots work the controls of a P-8A Poseidon on Feb. 26 in a flight over the Mediterranean Sea during the exercise Dynamic Manta.

Left: Petty Officer 1st Class Jeffrey Graham prepares to eject a sonobuoy to track a submarine in the Mediterranean during the exercise.

Poseidons watch seas as Russia lurks

By SCOTT WYLAND
Stars and Stripes

NASSIGONELLA, Sicily—The P-8A Poseidon crew spotted a submarine periscope, possibly Russian, poking up from the waves of the Mediterranean Sea.

They were told to fly onward—another mission took priority. The U.S. Navy aircraft was on its way to a simulated submarine hunt, part of the 11-day exercise Dynamic Manta that ended earlier this month, and there was little room to deviate from the plan.

It's not unusual for forward-deployed P-8A squadrons to discover Russian subs—it's part of their daily flight duties to track Russian maneuvers in European waters. Such moves have increased in recent years after a two-decade lull following the Cold War.

"Certainly, in the past decade, we've observed an increase in Russian submarine activity in the North Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea," said Rear Adm. Andrew Lennon, commander of NATO's submarines, while on a Dutch frigate during Dynamic Manta. "They've developed some very quiet and very capable submarines."

A low-flying Poseidon roared overhead, interrupting Lennon. These planes, which first deployed to Europe six years ago, are vital in anti-submarine warfare because they can detect enemy boats and provide aerial defense of allied ships, he said.

One benefit of NATO exercises helping partner nations learn to work together across the alliance is that one military tracking a hostile submarine can pass the track on to an ally before heading home, said Lt. Luke Moragne, mission commander of the P-8A's sub-tracking drill during Dynamic Manta.

Still, daily missions offer realistic training the crews can't get during an exercise, he said.

"There's nothing like being on top of an actual submarine," Moragne said.

Anti-submarine operations have been part of Naval Air Station Sigonella's operations since the 1960s, when the Soviets began

sending submarines into the Mediterranean.

Russian submarine deployments tapered off in the 1990s after the fall of the Soviet Union, as Moscow struggled to fund its military and suffered embarrassing setbacks such as the August 2000 sinking of the nuclear-powered cruise-missile submarine Kursk.

Stepped-up efforts

Russia has grown more militarily assertive in recent years, sending out ships, subs and aircraft to trail its rivals in the region. In December, Russian subs were involved for the first time in combat operations in Syria, when they fired volleys of cruise missiles at rebel targets.

Since Moscow's 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula, the U.S. has been stepping up its efforts to counter its Cold War enemy.

Three years ago, the Navy deployed its first P-8As—modified twin-jet Boeing P-737s—to this base in Sicily to replace aging P-3C Orions. The installation now operates a seven of the aircraft, making it the Poseidon hub for Europe.

Squadrons from Jacksonville, Fla., and Whidbey Island, Wash., deploy to Sigonella in six-month rotations to conduct year-round aerial reconnaissance.

Run by nine-person crews, the sub-hunting planes are outfitted with high-tech sensors, communications systems and radars that can detect ships hundreds of miles away or pinpoint a periscope hundreds of feet below on the ocean's surface.

"It's like seeing a straw in the middle of the water—it's difficult," said Lt. Mason Bailey, a P-8A pilot and flight commander. "But something in a wake... you can see it."

During the anti-submarine exercise, Bailey's P-8A flew southeast of Sicily to meet a NATO submarine the crew was assigned to hunt.

Five crewmembers sat shoulder-to-shoulder in front of a bank of electronic screens, with mission

commander Moragne at the center. They monitored radar, GPS, cameras, ocean conditions and radio transmissions from ships, planes and an array of sonobuoys.

The aircraft are equipped with 129 of the small floating devices, which are dropped into the water and transmit sonar data back to the plane to help track underwater targets.

With the help of computers that fuse the various data into a color-coded picture that can be passed to friendly ships and planes, Moragne helped plot the aircraft's course and follow the subsurface quarry.

The modified jetliners can also jam enemy signals and carry a host of weapons, including anti-sub missiles, torpedoes, bombs, depth charges and mines.

On the hunt

Though able to soar as high as 30,000 feet and drop as low as 200 feet above the water, the P-8As size put it among the least maneuverable aircraft in the Navy, said Bailey, the flight commander.

Still, flying them comes with a couple of advantages over piloting fighter jets, he said, including more flight time and deployments on land instead of aircraft carriers.

"I can talk to my wife every night," Bailey said during the simulated submarine hunt, which required a five-hour flight.

A few minutes later, the plane swooped to 400 feet. Everyone on board donned life preservers, as required when dropping below 1,000 feet.

The planes can fly up to 4,000 miles without refueling, enabling crews from Sigonella to watch over the Black Sea, Mediterranean and parts of the Atlantic Ocean.

The Navy also developed a way to top off their tanks in flight. A P-8A performed its first midair refueling over the Mediterranean in October.

Because the planes burn more fuel at lower altitudes, their travel distance depends on how often they dip low.

To conserve fuel and make the planes harder to detect, Boeing

is developing a kit for attaching wings to the Poseidon's anti-submarine torpedoes, turning them into glide bombs that can be released as high as 30,000 feet—much higher than the current version.

'Most awesome' job

From 400 feet, the plane rose to 1,500 feet, then dove again to 400 feet. Loud bangs reverberated as a crewmember launched sonobuoys from a pneumatic ejector.

A submarine is first tracked when it leaves port or surfaces at sea. A P-8A flies out to where the sub is expected to be, based on its trajectory, and drops a pattern of sonobuoys, said Moragne, the mission commander.

The components of the devices separate on impact with the water. An antenna floats on the surface while a listening device sinks to a prescribed depth and transmits what it hears back to the plane.

If a submarine is detected, the plane follows it until air command tells the crew to quit, Moragne said.

The buoys are stored like wine bottles in racks. Petty Officer 1st Class Jeffrey Graham pulled some sonobuoys from the rack and ejected them from the launcher with a sharp twack.

Each buoy's depth and radio frequency is typically preset, but Graham can adjust the settings later at the mission commander's request.

Graham opted for anti-submarine warfare in 2005 because he heard it was "the most awesome" Navy job, but his first years in the field were during the height of the U.S. wars in the Middle East, so he spent much of his time in aerial reconnaissance searching for desert targets.

With Russia and China becoming more active underwater and the U.S. military shifting its focus to monitor them, Graham is now doing what he signed up for.

"It's exciting," he said. "There's something new every day."

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Putin marks anniversary of Crimea annexation

By VLADIMIR
ISACHENKOV
Associated Press

MOSCOW—Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday marked the fifth anniversary of Russia's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine by visiting the Black Sea peninsula.

Putin began his trip by attending the launch of new power plants in Crimea, part of Moscow's efforts to upgrade the region's infrastructure. Ukraine has cut off energy supplies to the peninsula and blocked shipments of Crimea-bound cargo via its territory after Moscow annexed the region in 2014.

"The situation has changed radically," Putin said, adding that new power facilities will fully cover Crimea's needs.

Russia's modernization effort has included the construction of an 11.8-mile bridge which opened last year across the Kerch Strait that links the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. The \$3.6 billion project gave Crimea a land link to Russia. Previously, ties between the two depended on a ferry crossing that was often interrupted by bad weather.

Russia's annexation of Crimea drew U.S. and European Union sanctions against it. On Monday, NATO and the EU reaffirmed their strong condemnation of the land grab.

NATO allies said in a statement that "we strongly condemn this act, which we do not and will not recognize." They also criticized Russia's military buildup in Crimea and alleged rights abuses—including arbitrary detentions, arrest, and torture—against members of the Crimean Tartar community.

EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said "we stand in full solidarity with Ukraine, supporting its sovereignty and territorial integrity." NATO and the EU also called for the release of Ukrainian seamen who were seized by Russia in November's standoff in the Black Sea.

Putin claims that Russia "reintegrated" Crimea after the ouster of Ukraine's former pro-Russian president in 2014 to protect ethnic Russians who made up the majority of Crimea's population. The Kremlin was also worried that a new Ukrainian government could annul Russia's lease on its key Black Sea navy base in Crimea and welcome NATO there instead.

WAR ON TERRORISM

Syrian official slams 'illegitimate' US presence

By ALBERT AJI
Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria — Syria's defense minister on Monday slammed what he called the "illegitimate" U.S. military presence in his country, vowing that Damascus has a right to self-defense, while Iraq said a border crossing with Syria will open in the coming days.

Syrian Gen. Ali Ayoub spoke during a rare joint news conference with visiting Iranian and Iraqi army commanders who have been holding meetings in the capital, Damascus.

The U.S. currently has about 2,000 troops in eastern and northern Syria and is expected to withdraw hundreds of them in the coming months.

The meeting in Damascus illustrates the strong alliance between Iran, Iraq and Syria at a time when the U.S. is seeking to isolate and increase sanctions against

'Syria has affirmed the necessity of the withdrawal of these (American) forces. It is a force of occupation and violates the country's sovereignty.'

Gen. Ali Ayoub
Syrian defense minister

Iran and its regional allies.

Tehran has sent troops and Iran-backed fighters into Syria and Iraq to fight alongside government forces against Islamic militants, including Islamic State, which is on the verge of defeat by U.S.-backed Kurdish fighters in the last area under its control in eastern Syria.

"The Americans will leave Syria as they left other places because this is an illegitimate presence and is rejected no matter what the justifications are," Ayoub said. "Syria has affirmed the necessity of the

withdrawal of these forces. It is a force of occupation and violates the country's sovereignty," he said.

After years of setbacks, Syrian government forces have been on the offensive since 2016 and have regained control of large parts of the country thanks to Russian and Iranian support. Ayoub vowed to eventually capture the last major rebel stronghold in the northwestern province of Idlib.

Asked about reports of tension between Iranians and Russians in Syria, Ayoub strongly denied them, saying, "The role of

the friends and allies was important in all that has been achieved on the ground."

Iranian army commander Maj. Gen. Mohammad Hossein Bagheri, who arrived in Damascus on Sunday, said "Syria and Iraq have asked the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Iranian armed forces to stand by their side and help, through advisers as well as logistical support."

He added that Iranian troops had been invited by Syrian authorities and would leave only when asked by the Syrians.

Iran's official IRNA news agency quoted Bagheri as saying that Iran, Syria and Iraq will work together to bring an end to the presence of foreign forces in Syria.

"The current phase has aimed at reinstating the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria, as well as the departure of all forces who have been present in the country without permission" from Damascus, he said.

Hamza bin Laden finds himself in crosshairs of international powers

By JON GAMBRELL
Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Years after the death of his father at the hands of a U.S. Navy SEAL raid in Pakistan, Hamza bin Laden now finds himself in the crosshairs of world powers.

In rapid succession in recent weeks, the U.S. put a bounty of up to \$1 million on him; the U.N. Security Council named him to a global sanctions list, sparking a new Interpol notice for his arrest; and his home country of Saudi Arabia revealed it had revoked his citizenship.

Those measures suggest that international officials believe the militant, now 30, is an increasingly serious threat. He is not the head of al-Qaida, but he has risen in prominence within the terrorism network his father founded, and the group may be grooming him to stand as a leader for a young generation of militants.

"Hamza was destined to be in his father's footsteps," said Ali Soufan, a former FBI agent focused on counterterrorism who investigated al-Qaida's attack on the USS Cole. "He is poised to have a senior leadership role in al-Qaida."

"There is probably other intelligence that indicates something's happening, and that's what put this thing on the front burner," he said.

Much remains unknown about Hamza bin Laden — particularly, the key question of where he is — but his life has mirrored al-Qaida's path, moving quietly and suddenly forward, escalating its offenses and rival, Islamic State.

Hamza bin Laden's exact date of birth remains disputed, but most put it in 1989. That was a year of transition for his father, who had gained attention for his role in supplying money and arms to the mujahideen fighting against the Soviet occupation of

Afghanistan in the 1980s.

As the war wound down, Osama bin Laden would launch a new group that sought to leverage that global network for a broader jihad. They named it al-Qaida, or "the base" in Arabic.

Already, bin Laden had met and married Khairiah Saber, a child psychologist from Saudi Arabia's port city of Jiddah. She gave birth

'This boy has been living, breathing and experiencing the al-Qaida life since age zero.'

Elisabeth Kendall
senior research fellow at Pembroke College at Oxford University

Elisabeth Kendall, a senior research fellow at Pembroke College at Oxford University who studies Hamza bin Laden.

al-Qaida's attacks against the U.S. began in earnest in 1998 with the dual bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania that killed 224 people. Its 2000 suicide attack against the USS Cole off Yemen killed at least 17 sailors.

Then came Sept. 11, 2001. The coordinated al-Qaida hijacking of four U.S. commercial flights killed nearly 3,000 people and prompted the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan seeking to topple al-Qaida's ally, the Taliban, and capture Osama bin Laden. The al-Qaida leader escaped, splitting from his family as he slipped into Pakistan. That was when Hamza,

to Hamza, their only child together, as al-Qaida took its first, tentative steps toward the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

"This boy has been living, breathing and experiencing the al-Qaida life since age zero," said



AL-JAZEERA via APTN/AP

A young boy, center, identified as Hamza bin Laden reads a poem about Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar in Ghazni, Afghanistan, in November 2001.

12 at the time, saw his father for the last time — receiving a parting gift of prayer beads.

"It was as if we pulled out our lives and left them there," he wrote of the separation.

He and his mother followed other al-Qaida members into Pakistan. From there, they crossed the border into Iran, where other al-Qaida leaders hid them in a series of safe houses, according to experts and analysis of documents seized after the U.S. Navy SEAL team raid that killed Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, Pakistan.

Eventually, Iran put the al-Qaida members on its soil into custody, holding them reportedly on military bases or in other closed compounds.

His Iranian detention ended up keeping Hamza bin Laden and the other al-Qaida members safe as the U.S. waged a campaign of drone strikes targeting militants across the Mideast. Hamza's half brother, Saad, escaped Iranian custody and made it to Pakistan, only to be immediately killed by an American strike in 2009.

During that time, Hamza married an al-Qaida supporter, a daughter of Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah, an Egyptian who the U.S. says helped plan the November 1998 embassy attacks. They had two children, Osama and Khairiah, named after his



Hamza bin Laden

parents.

In March 2010, Hamza and others left Iranian custody. He went to Pakistan's Waziristan province, where he asked for weapons training, according to a letter to the elder bin Laden.

His mother left for Abbottabad, joining her husband in his hideout

On May 2, 2011, the Navy SEAL team raided Abbottabad, killing Osama bin Laden and his son, Khalid, as well as others. Saber and other wives living in the house were imprisoned. Hamza again disappeared.

In August 2015, a video emerged on jihadi websites of Ayman al-Zawahiri, the current leader of al-Qaida, introducing "a lion from the den of al-Qaida" — Hamza bin Laden.

Since then, he has been featured in about a dozen al-Qaida messages, delivering speeches on everything from the war in Syria to President Donald Trump's visit to Saudi Arabia. His frequent messages have raised speculation that the terrorism group may be trying to plan for the future by putting forward a fresh face.

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NATION

Pediatrician gets minimum 79 years for assaulting kids

By MICHAEL RUBINKAM
Associated Press

EBENSBURG, Pa. — A former Pennsylvania pediatrician was sentenced to at least 79 years in prison on Monday for the sexual assault of 31 children, most of them patients, in a case that state medical regulators failed to act on nearly two decades ago.

Dr. Johnnie Barto, of Johnstown, was sentenced on dozens of counts, including aggravated indecent assault and child endangerment. Prosecutors say he spent decades abusing boys and girls in the exam room at his pediatric practice in western Pennsylvania and at local hospitals, with his victims typically ranging in age from 8 to 12. One was an infant.

Nineteen people gave victim impact statements, both in person and through a prosecutor, describing how Barto caused them to feel hopeless and despair, caused depression and anxiety and instilled a fear of doctors.

Barto's wife, Linda Barto, was among them. "He has been lying to me about everything for all of the 52 years I have known him. ... He spent his whole sinister life lying and sneaking around, so he could carry on his abuse uninterrupted," she said. She said her heart was heavy for the victims.

The attorney general's office had asked for 31 to 62 years in prison. Barto declined to make a

statement.

He pleaded guilty in December to some counts and no contest to others. He's been jailed pending sentencing. His lawyer, David Weaver, has said Barto opted to enter pleas, so the hearing could begin for his family, his victims and for himself.

Authorities had a chance to stop Barto in 2000, when he appeared before the Pennsylvania Board of Medicine on administrative charges that he molested two young girls in the 1990s. But regulators threw out the case and allowed him to keep practicing medicine, saying the allegations were "incongruous to his reputation." At the time, the prominent pediatrician had a lot of support in the community.

Barto, now 71, went on to molest at least a dozen more young patients before his arrest in January 2018, according to the state attorney general's office.

The medical board's 7-2 decision to let him off the hook in 2000 sparked outrage from victims and at least one former board member. Vivian Lowenstein, who had voted to strip Barto of his license, told The Associated Press last year that she was "sick about it" and that the case was as an example of how Pennsylvania's physician regulators typically looked out for their own.

The Pennsylvania Department of State, which provides legal and administrative support to the board and prosecutes administrative cases of doctor misconduct, said last year that "the Board of Medicine takes allegations of sexual misconduct by professional licensees very seriously."

Regulators were not commented on the board's 2000 decision.



Barto



NATH HARRIN/AP

A windsock is seen at Offutt Air Force Base in Bellevue, Neb., site of the bases' flooded runway, Sunday. Rising waters from the Missouri River flooded about a third of the base, including about 3,000 feet of the base's 11,700-foot runway.

Midwest: Training site completely underwater

FROM FRONT PAGE

Offutt, wrote on his Facebook page. He also oversees base operations.

His team at the base is now preparing its priorities for when the water recedes, focusing first on safety and then on "generation of combat power," he wrote.

Since preparation began Friday, the colonel has chronicled online the devastating flooding that now covers much of the southeastern portion of Offutt. That area includes the majority of the aircraft hangars for the wing's RC-135s, fixed-wing reconnaissance aircraft, said Ryan Hansen, 55th Wing spokesman. The majority were moved to higher ground on the base and eight were flown off base to a National Guard facility in Lincoln and MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Fla.

Base officials evacuated the Base Lake, a recreational camping area, early Friday, and personnel worked around the clock to fortify facilities with more than 235,000 sandbags and 460 flood barriers to minimize damage as much as possible, according to a news release on the Offutt Facebook page.

The efforts couldn't stop the water from overflowing. With 30 buildings flooded and one access gate blocked by water, the base, which is also home to U.S. Strategic Command, is open only to mission essential personnel. About 10,000 people work on the installation. Of those 6,500 are active-duty servicemembers.

The flooded facilities range from the 55th Wing's headquarters to a veterinary clinic to a 55th Maintenance Group facility that is on the edge of the flooded area. Hansen estimated the maintenance facility is flooded with water about 2 to 3 feet high, with other base facilities further east flooded worse.

No housing or barracks were flooded, Hansen said.

"It is extremely clear that we face a grand challenge," Manion wrote Sunday, with photos of the airfield's partially flooded runway. "Our goal is to only

reopen when it's safe."

Record-setting snowfall this winter is now melting, causing water levels to rise in the Missouri and Platte rivers and Papio Creek. Offutt sits north of where the two rivers meet.

Camp Ashland, a training site, is about 25 miles west of Offutt on the Platte River and is "completely underwater," said Spc. Lisa Crawford, spokeswoman for the Nebraska National Guard. Flooding there began Wednesday and the 225 soldiers on base taking classes were evacuated.

Over the weekend, a levee protecting the base broke and military officials have not been able to access the base and assess damage, Crawford said.

"Right now we are focusing our attention on response efforts for the rest of the state and will assess our needs at a later time," she said.

The Nebraska National Guard has nearly 80 servicemembers conducting medical evacuations as well as air and ground rescue missions, said Master Sgt. Michael Houk, spokesman for the National Guard. Since Friday, about 43 people have been rescued. Equipment in use includes three UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and one LUH-72A Lakota helicopter.

Ashland flooded despite updated infrastructure following catastrophic flooding in May 2015, reported the Omaha World-Herald. In response, the Guard spent about \$3.7 million installing floodgates on some buildings, rebuilding others on stilts and adding additional flood-control measures.

With the water moving downstream, flooding has begun in Missouri with hundreds of homes flooding as levees are breached in the northwestern part of the state. The Associated Press reported. Military C-130 planes, designed to transport cargo or people, were evacuated last week from nearby Rosecrans Air National Guard Base in St. Joseph.

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Ruling could reveal gun-maker's secret marketing strategy

By DAVE ALTMARI

The Hartford (Conn.) Courant

HARTFORD, Conn. — From the day they stood together to announce their lawsuit in their Bridgeport, Conn., attorney's office four years ago, a group of Sandy Hook parents have said the same thing — all they wanted was to learn about the marketing strategy behind the Remington semiautomatic rifle used to kill their children.

Facing what seemed like impenetrable congressional protection for the gun industry, the odds grew longer when a state judge threw the case out. But last week's stunning state Supreme Court

ruling allowing the case to proceed has increased their chances of getting access to secret marketing documents that gun manufacturers like Remington have fought hard to protect.

"We're not starting from a completely blank slate here. You don't get to a marketing campaign like they have had targeting young men that wasn't well thought out," said Josh Koskoff, lawyer for the Sandy Hook families.

"These families weren't the target audience for Remington. The Sandy Hook shooter was their target. He was in the crosshairs of their marketing campaign, and we all knew a lot about what that gun could do."

The state Supreme Court, by a 4-3 margin, remanded the gun case back to Bridgeport Superior Court — a ruling that paves the way for the families to subpoena internal documents on how the gun companies have marketed the AR-15, which has become the weapon of choice for mass shooters. The gun manufacturers have closely guarded information on how they market the assault weapons.

"All we have ever wanted is to peel back the layers of this corporate entity Remington so we can find out what their goals were and objectives were in the marketing of this product," William Sherlach said.

His wife, Mary Sherlach, the school psychologist, was one of 26 people gunned down in five minutes on Dec. 14, 2012, by Adam Lanza using a Bushmaster AR-15 made by Remington.

Remington and lawyers for the gun-maker have declined to comment since the 4-3 decision by the state Supreme Court.

Lawyers for Remington have 10 days to file a motion for the state Supreme Court to reconsider its ruling.

Remington would then have 90 days to decide whether to file a writ of certiorari with the U.S. Supreme Court asking it to overturn the decision, a process likely to delay the case further.

The court ruled that the Sandy Hook families should have the opportunity to prove that Remington violated the Connecticut Unfair Trade Practices Act by marketing what it knew was a weapon designed for military use to civilians such as the Sandy Hook shooter, Adam Lanza, and his mother, Nancy Lanza.

"This is a landmark and potentially historic decision partly because it opens up Remington to discovery where for the very first time they will have to reveal documents they haven't wanted to similar to what happened with the tobacco companies," said UCLA law professor Adam Winkler.

NATION

Supreme Court agrees to hear DC sniper case

By JESSICA GRESKO

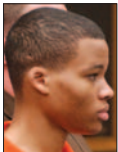
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to consider Virginia's plea to reinstate the life-without-parole sentence of a man who as a teenager participated in sniper shootings that terrorized the Washington region in 2002.

The justices said they will take up the state's appeal in the case of Lee Boyd Malvo, who was 17 when he and John Allen Muhammad fatally shot 10 people in

Maryland, Virginia and Washington. Malvo was sentenced to life-without-parole terms in Virginia and in Maryland, and Muhammad was sentenced to death and was executed in 2009.

Malvo was sentenced to four life terms for crimes he com-



Malvo in 2003

mitted in Virginia. But the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit ruled last year that while Malvo's life-without-parole sentences were legal when they were imposed, Supreme Court decisions that followed altered sentencing requirements for juvenile offenders.

The appeals court judges said a resentencing would determine whether Malvo qualifies as "one of the rare juvenile offenders" who can be sentenced to life without the possibility of parole because his "crimes reflect per-

manent incorrigibility." They said if his crimes instead "reflect the transient immaturity of youth" he's entitled to a sentence short of life without parole.

The Supreme Court will review that decision. As is typical, the justices did not make any comment in agreeing to hear the case, which likely will be heard in the fall.

Regardless of what the Supreme Court decides, Malvo isn't getting out of prison anytime soon. He isn't currently getting a new

sentencing hearing in Maryland, where he struck a plea deal and was sentenced to six life-without-parole prison terms for shootings that took place in that state.

A judge previously ruled that Malvo would not get new sentencing hearings in Maryland, Malvo has appealed.

Malvo and his mentor, Muhammad, who was 41, shot people as they pumped gas, loaded packages into their cars and went about their everyday business during a three-week period.

Facebook: Lack of local news hinders service

By DAVID BAUDER

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Facebook's effort to establish a service that provides its users with local news and information is being hindered by the lack of outlets where the company's technicians can find original reporting.

The service, launched last year, is available in some 400 cities in the U.S. But the social media giant said it has found that 40 percent of Americans live in places where there weren't enough local news stories to support it.

Facebook announced Monday it would share its research with academics at Duke, Harvard, Minnesota and North Carolina who are studying the extent of news deserts created by newspaper closures and staff downsizing.

Some 1,800 newspapers have closed in the United States over the last 15 years, according to the University of North Carolina. Newsroom employment has declined by 45 percent as the industry struggles with a broken business model partly caused by the success of companies on the internet, including Facebook.

The Facebook service, called "Today In," collects news stories

from various local outlets, along with government and community groups. The company deems a community unsuitable for "Today In" if it cannot find a single day in a month with at least five news items available to share.

There's not a wide geographical disparity. For example, the percentage of news deserts is higher in the Northeast and Midwest, at 43 percent, Facebook said. In the South and West, the figure is 38 percent.

"It affirms the fact that we have a real lack of original local reporting," said Penelope Muse Abernathy, a University of North Carolina professor who studies the topic. She said she hopes the data helps pinpoint areas where the need is greatest, eventually leading to some ideas for solutions.

Facebook doesn't necessarily have the answers. "Everyone can learn from working together," said Ann Kornblut, director of news initiatives at the company.

The company plans to award some 100 grants, ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000, to people with ideas for making more news available, said Jimmy O'Keefe, product marketing manager for "Today In."



Mary Esch/AP

Colton Welch, a junior at the State University of New York at Morrisville, N.Y., tends hydroponic tomato plants, which will provide students with data applicable to cannabis cultivation.

Colleges add cannabis to the curriculum

By MARY ESCH

Associated Press

Grace DeNoya is used to getting snickers when people learn she's majoring in marijuana.

"My friends make good-natured jokes about getting a degree in weed," said DeNoya, one of the first students in a new four-year degree program in medicinal plant chemistry at Northern Michigan University. "I say, 'No, it's a serious degree, a chemistry degree first and foremost. It's hard work. Organic chemistry is a bear.'"

As a green gold rush in legal marijuana and its nondrug cousin hemp spreads across North America, a growing number of colleges are adding cannabis to the curriculum to prepare graduates for careers cultivating, researching, analyzing and marketing the herb.

Research shows there are high times ahead for all kinds of careers in cannabis, ranging from greenhouse and dispensary operators to edible product developers, marketing specialists, quality assurance lab directors and pharmaceutical researchers. Arcview Market Research, which focuses on cannabis industry trends, projects the industry will support

467,000 jobs by 2022.

And even in states where recreational marijuana remains illegal, including New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, some colleges have launched cannabis studies programs in anticipation of legalization or to prepare students for jobs in other states.

"We're providing a fast track to get into the industry," said Brandon Canfield, a chemistry professor at Northern Michigan University in Marquette.

Two years ago, he proposed a new major in medicinal plant chemistry after attending a conference where cannabis industry representatives spoke of an urgent need for analytical chemists for product quality assessment and assurance.

The four-year degree, which is the closest thing to a marijuana major at an accredited U.S. university, has drawn nearly 300 students from 48 states, Canfield said. Students don't be growing marijuana, which was recently legalized by Michigan voters for recreational use. But Canfield said students will learn to measure and extract medicinal compounds from plants such as St. John's Wort and ginseng and transfer that knowledge

to marijuana.

A similar program is being launched at Minot State University in North Dakota this spring. The college said students will learn lab skills applicable to medical marijuana, hops, botanical supplements and food science industries.

"All of our graduates are going to be qualified to be analysts in a lab setting," Canfield said, noting that experience could lead to a position paying \$70,000 right out of school. Those wishing to start their own businesses can choose an entrepreneurial track that adds courses in accounting, legal issues and marketing.

The expected boom in cannabis-related jobs has colleges responding with a range of offerings. Colorado State University offers a cannabis studies minor focusing on social, legal, political and health impacts. Ohio State University, Harvard, the University of Denver and Vanderbilt offer classes on marijuana policy and law.

Agricultural schools are also getting in on the action. The University of Connecticut is launching a cannabis horticulture program this spring.

Police sued over bulldozer death of pot garden suspect

Associated Press

Pennsylvania State Police acted recklessly when troopers used a bulldozer to pursue a Grateful Dead fan caught growing marijuana on public land, killing him when he wound up under the machine's treads, according to a civil rights lawsuit filed Monday.

Greg Longenecker's family said state police had no business chasing him with a dangerous piece of machinery — especially over a few pot plants the 51-year-old was cultivating for personal use.

The chase developed as Longenecker and his friend, David B. Light, tended 10 marijuana plants in a small clearing on state game

lands near Reading, Pa.

A Pennsylvania Game Commission worker, operating a bulldozer in the area, spotted their car parked in a field where vehicles weren't allowed and called police.

Light surrendered, but Longenecker fled, disappearing into the thick vegetation.

State police began a lengthy search. A state police helicopter spotted Longenecker in the underbrush, and the game commission worker, with a trooper aboard, used the bulldozer to blaze a trail in pursuit.

How Longenecker got caught in the machine's treads is hotly disputed.

NATION

Role in admissions scheme adds to list of USC scandals

By BRIAN MELLEY
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Roy Nwaisser has four degrees from the University of Southern California and is a superstar of its storied football squad — he hasn't missed a home or away game in 27 years.

But his devotion has been tested by a series of scandals culminating with the school's starring role in a massive college admissions bribery case that is the latest disgrace threatening to tarnish USC's hard-fought reputation as an academic, as well as athletic, powerhouse.

Hours after that news broke Tuesday, Nwaisser turned down a request to speak at an alumni fundraiser in Nevada.

"I can't in good conscience promote the university until they clean up their act," Nwaisser wrote to the group. "If people want to donate their money they should give it to institutions with fewer scandals and less corruption."

It's been a bruising two years for the university in the heart of Los Angeles. The president who helped boost the school's endowment by raising \$7 billion stepped down amid investigations into a medical school dean accused of smoking methamphetamine with a woman who overdosed, and reports the school ignored com-

'If people want to donate their money they should give it to institutions with fewer scandals and less corruption.'

Roy Nwaisser
USC alumnus

plaints of widespread sexual misconduct by the longtime campus gynecologist.

Meantime, an assistant men's basketball coach pleaded guilty to charges stemming from a wide-ranging FBI probe of corruption in college hoops.

Last week's announcement of federal criminal charges over admissions cheating also targeted prestigious schools such as Stanford, Georgetown and Yale, but no other institution was implicated as much as USC.

Prosecutors say wealthy parents paid bribes to either have a college counselor rig standardized tests or get their children admitted as recruits of sports they didn't play.

More than half the 32 parents charged were trying to bribe their children's way into USC. One of those parents, Homayoun Zadeh, is a USC dentistry professor now facing termination.

To gain access for their two daughters, actress Lori Loughlin

and her fashion designer husband, Mossimo Giannulli, paid \$500,000 to have them labeled as crew team recruits at USC even though neither is a rower, prosecutors said.

The school fired senior associate athletic director Donna Heinel and water polo coach Jovan Vavic, who won 16 national titles. Both were accused of taking bribes. Two former USC coaches also were named in the scheme.

In a letter to the campus, interim President Wanda Austin twice emphasized that prosecutors alleged the school was a victim of employees who purposely deceived it. In a follow-up, Austin did not use the word victim and said the school was cooperating with prosecutors and conducting its own investigation that could lead to further discipline.

USC plans to redirect donations that were part of the scheme toward scholarships for needy students, Austin said. It would also deny admission to applicants



REED SAXON/AP

The University Village area of the University of Southern California in Los Angeles is shown on March 12. The past two years have been bruising for the Los Angeles university.

accepted through the scheme and review the cases of students and graduates who fraudulently gained admission.

A university spokesman declined requests for interviews. Some faculty have put the blame on former President C.L. Max Nikias, who was lauded for amassing a huge endowment but criticized for not acting quickly when scandals hit.

Nikias stepped down last summer as a chorus of faculty called for his resignation after hundreds of women accused Dr. George Tyndall of misconduct ranging from sexual abuse to conducting unnecessary examinations and taking photos of genitalia for no medical purpose.

Tyndall has not been charged and has denied the allegations.

The university recently agreed to settle a class-action lawsuit by paying \$215 million to potentially thousands of women he examined.

There are 20,000 undergrads and 27,000 graduate students. Nearly a quarter of students come from abroad — the vast majority from China. Tuition is \$55,000. Kelly Jiang, 18, a sophomore from Kunming, China, whose parents pay \$74,000 a year for tuition and expenses, said she feared the scandal would taint her degree.

"It really diminishes the value of USC," Jiang said. "If someone can just pay \$500,000 to get into USC and get a diploma, what are we as USC graduates, or people hiring USC graduates, supposed to think?"

Nev. mulls technology to scan cellphones after road accidents

By RYAN TARINELLI
Associated Press

CARSON CITY, Nev. — Most states ban texting behind the wheel, but a legislative proposal could make Nevada one of the first states to allow police to use a contentious technology to find out if a person was using a cellphone during a car crash.

The measure is igniting privacy concern and has led lawmakers to question the practicality of the technology even while acknowledging the threat of distracted driving.

The future of the Nevada proposal isn't clear. A similar measure introduced in 2017 failed in the New York Legislature, but lawmakers are considering it again.

Law enforcement officials argue that distracted driving is underreported and that weak punishments do little to stop drivers from texting, scrolling or otherwise using their phones. Adding to the problem, they say there is no consistent police practice that holds those drivers accountable

for traffic crashes, unlike drunken driving.

If the Nevada measure passes, it would allow police to use a device known as the "textalyzer," which connects to a cellphone and looks for user activity, such as opening a Facebook messenger call screen. It is made by Israel-based company Cellebrite, which says the technology does not access or store personal content.

It has not been tested in the field and is not being used by any law enforcement agencies. The company said the device could be tested in the field if the Nevada legislation passes.

Opponents air concerns that the measure violates the Fourth Amendment, which protects against unreasonable search and seizure.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says 3,450 people died nationwide in 2016 from traffic crashes where distraction was an issue. About 14 percent involved someone using a cellphone, the agency said.

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NATION

Gas leak blast in LA leaves 2 injured

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A tanker truck leaking gasoline caught fire and caused an explosion that injured two people and sent up a huge plume visible across Los Angeles on Sunday, authorities said.

The blast reverberated through storm drains and sent manhole covers into the air, fire department officials said.

"There was a big explosion — we thought it was an earthquake," resident Joseph Casillas told the Los Angeles Times. "There was a fireball and a tornado of fire."

Crews responding to reports of a gas smell found the tanker fully engulfed and then were forced back by the force of the blast, officials said. Dozens of firefighters took nearly two hours to douse the



DAMIAN DOVARGANES/AP

Firefighters work at the scene of a fire after an explosion in Los Angeles on Sunday.

stubborn blaze in a neighborhood about 6 miles south of downtown Los Angeles. Thick, black smoke snaked into the sky and eventually blew out to sea.

Two people were hospitalized, one with injuries described as se-

rious. The other victim suffered minor injuries, fire officials said. The flames burned a two-story home and displaced a family, authorities said.

The smoldering tank, which was in a storage yard, lay on its

side with one end blown wide open. Officials didn't immediately know how much gas was originally inside the tank, which could hold up to 9,000 gallons.

The leak and subsequent explosion are under investigation.

Petrochemical terminal fire poses threat near Houston

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Some Houston-area residents have been urged to remain indoors as a fire burns at a petrochemical terminal.

The fire started Sunday morning at Intercontinental Terminals Co. in Deer Park, about 15 miles southeast of Houston, and continued to burn Sunday night. Deer Park officials issued a shelter-in-place directive after the fire was reported. Efforts to extinguish the fire with foam continue.

Harris County officials say the fire started at the terminal that stores petrochemical liquids and gases, including fuel oil and bunker oil. The company's website says the terminal has a storage capacity of 13.1 million barrels.

The fire is the second in as many days at a Houston-area petrochemical facility. A fire at an ExxonMobil plant in nearby Baytown that broke out Saturday has been contained.



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NATION

Warren embraces underdog role in 2020 race

Associated Press

BOSTON — Elizabeth Warren has spent much of the last decade as a leader of the Democratic Party's liberal wing.

But 3½ months into her presidential campaign, the Massachusetts senator is facing tough questions about fundraising and electability, along with lingering skepticism about her past claim to Native American identity. The longtime liberal superstar is embracing an uncomfortable role in the crowded 2020 contest: the underdog.

"This is the race I want to run," Warren, 69, said in an interview with *The Associated Press*.

With Warren in the middle of the pack in early polling, her Boston-based senior advisers are implementing an aggressive — if risky — strategy that calls on her to forgo traditional high-dollar fundraising events and devote the saved time to interactions with rank-and-file voters.

Advisers say she'll also focus on seizing opportunities to stake bold new policy positions in real time, as she did recently by calling for the breakup of big technology companies like Amazon, which allow her to shape the debate and showcase her policy bona fides.

Her success or failure will help deter-



ELISE AMENDOLA/AP

Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., speaks at a campaign house party in Salem, N.H., on Friday.

mine the direction of the Democratic Party in 2020 and, more specifically, whether Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders can main-

tain his early place at the head of the presidential primary pack. While Warren has sometimes sought to distinguish herself

from Sanders, describing herself as a capitalist while Sanders runs as a democratic socialist, the New England senators appeal to the same progressive, populist wing of their party that is an increasingly dominant force in the age of President Donald Trump.

So far, Sanders has bested Warren in the few objective measures that exist: fundraising and polling. While the first votes won't be cast for another 10 months or so, former Warren allies in her neighboring state of New Hampshire, which holds the nation's first primary, see cause for concern.

"I just don't know if she would go over nationally," said former New Hampshire state Rep. Daniel Hansberry, who was among 27 current and former state lawmakers who signed a 2015 letter urging Warren to seek the presidency. "In the Northeast and on the West Coast I wouldn't be a bit surprised if she got a huge vote. But I don't know if she's too progressive for other parts of the country."

Another signatory, former New Hampshire state Rep. Frank Heffron, said he'd be satisfied if Warren ultimately won the election but said "it's very unlikely" he'll support her in the primary.

Jane Sanders essential to revolution of her husband

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Before Bernie Sanders took the stage to formally launch his 2020 presidential campaign this month, the candidate's most influential adviser took the mic. To cheers, Jane Sanders introduced herself as the Brooklyn, N.Y., crowd as "Bernie's wife," then conceded that wasn't the most politically correct label.

To be sure, identifying Jane Sanders as "the wife" hardly captures the scope of her influence on her husband's political career. Across 30 years and a dozen campaigns for federal office, she has served variously as her husband's media consultant, surrogate, fundraiser, chief of staff, campaign spokeswoman and top strategist.

His political revolution has become her career. And her political and business activities have at times become his headline. As the Vermont senator undertakes his second presidential run and scrambles his inner circle, Jane Sanders remains an indispensable making her perhaps the most influential woman in the 2020 campaign who isn't a candidate.

"Bernie's top adviser always has been and will continue to be Jane," said Jeff Weaver, a Sanders adviser. She makes a voice in almost every political decision her husband makes, travels with him for major events and is deeply involved in formulating policies, issues and campaign infrastructure. "At every level," Weaver said, "Jane is intimately involved."



NAMI Y. HUN/AP

Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and his wife, Jane, greet supporters as they leave after his 2020 presidential campaign stop at Navy Pier in Chicago on March 3.

political judgment, family opportunism and flawed ethics — from political foes, good government advocates and longtime Sanders watchers in Vermont and in the progressive movement.

Most recently, critics questioned the role played by the Sanders Institute, a nonprofit co-founded by Jane Sanders and her son, for blending elements of fundraising, family and campaign policy development.

Her dual roles at the institute and in her husband's campaign carried echoes of the Clinton Foundation, which Bernie Sanders criticized in 2016 as a possible ethics conflict and back door for foreign donors seeking to influence his then-rival, Hillary Clinton.

"Bernie Sanders ran against Hillary Clinton in 2016 criticizing her for the vast sums of money she raised and he seems to be following in some of her footsteps," said Lawrence R. Jacobs, director of the Center for the Study of Politics and Governance at the University

of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs. "Now he's raising vast sums of money and it's being controlled and shaped by his family."

Jane Sanders asked last week to remove the think tank as a possible campaign ethics target, telling *The Associated Press* that the institute's operations and fundraising would be suspended for the balance of her husband's 2020 presidential campaign. Since its creation in 2017, the group raised more than \$700,000 but has not disclosed most of its donors. She said the decision to put the Sanders Institute on hiatus was "a forward-looking way to deal with potential concerns."

Sanders may prove an important surrogate for her husband, particularly in a race crowded with female candidates and potentially hinging on how women vote. She publicly defended her husband when he faced criticism for the way his 2016 campaign handled accusations of sexual harassment.

O'Rourke says he raised \$6.1M in first 24 hours

BY MATT VISER
The Washington Post

Beto O'Rourke, of Texas, reported raising more than \$6.1 million during the first 24 hours of his presidential campaign, a record-setting haul that narrowly tops the amount announced by Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and dwarfs everyone else in the 2020 field.

O'Rourke was a fundraising juggernaut during his U.S. Senate race in Texas last year, but there were significant questions about whether that would translate to a national campaign where he was running against fellow Democrats, not Republican Sen. Ted Cruz.

The answer appears to be yes. O'Rourke's campaign said he raised \$6,136,763 from donations that came from all 50 states, the District of Columbia and every U.S. territory.

"In just 24 hours, Americans across this country came together to prove that it is possible to run a true grassroots campaign for president — a campaign by all of us for all of us that answers not to the PACs, corporations, and special interests but to the people," O'Rourke said in a statement.

In his first day as a candidate, Sanders reported raising \$5,925 million from 223,000 donors, which brought his average contribution to \$27.

O'Rourke's campaign would not release the total number of donors or the amount raised any subsequent days.

Sen. Kamala D. Harris, D-Calif., reported raising \$1.5 million from 38,000 donors in the 24 hours after she announced her campaign. Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., did not announce how much she raised, but on her first

day, she pulled in at least \$300,000 from 8,000 donors, according to fundraising figures reported by ActBlue, an online fundraising organization used by Warren and other Democrats.

Several Democratic campaigns — those of Sen. Amy Klobuchar, of Minnesota, Washington Gov. Jay Inslee and former Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper — said they raised about \$1 million over 48 hours.

There is no way to confirm the figures the campaigns are releasing until they file reports with the Federal Election Commission in several more weeks.

With at least 15 candidates in the race, fundraising is a crucial barometer for demonstrating who can attract broad enough support to sustain a campaign. It is also a metric used by the Democratic National Committee to qualify for the debates, which are scheduled to begin in June.

But the presence of so many candidates could complicate fundraising, because some of the candidates came into the race with overlapping lists of donors.

The figures so far establish O'Rourke and Sanders as the two most prodigious fundraisers out of the gate and could set up a clash between the two.

Sanders' supporters at times predicted O'Rourke during his Iowa trip last week, asking pointed questions about his positions on health care or his past alignment with more moderate stances.

O'Rourke eschewed the socialist label that Sanders embraces and said he considers himself a capitalist.

NATION



MARK REIS, THE (COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO.) GAZETTE/AP

Above: A Cheyenne Mountain High School student wears a headdress and face paint as he cheers for his school — which uses “Indians” as its team mascot — in the 4A State Soccer Championship game at Dick’s Sporting Goods Park in Commerce City, Colo.

Right: Foam images of the Cleveland Indians’ mascot, Chief Wahoo, are sold at the Indians’ team shop in Cleveland in January 2018. The Chief Wahoo logo is being removed from the Cleveland Indians’ uniform this season, but the Club will still sell merchandise featuring the mascot in Northeast Ohio.



TONY DEJAK/AP

Frozen in time

Native Americans say movement to end old redface stereotypes is slow

BY FELICIA FONSECA
Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. John Little can hardly go a week without a reminder that he and other Native Americans often are viewed as relics of the past: the Indian maiden on the butter container at the grocery store, the kids’ teepees sold at popular retailers and the sports fans with their faces painted doing tomahawk chops at games.

But he doesn’t hear widespread outrage over these images that many Native Americans find offensive, even as the country has spent most of the year coming to grips with blackface and racist imagery following the revelation of a racist photo on the Virginia governor’s college yearbook page. Since then, new examples have surfaced regularly, most recently a TV host who painted her face brown in a parody of Oscar-nominated Mexican actress Yalitza Aparicio.

“These are everyday realities for Native people,” said Little, a Standing Rock Sioux tribal member.

Redface may get less attention because of ingrained misconceptions and feelings of entitlement to Native American culture and land, scholars say. Native Americans also are a relatively small group, making up less than 2 percent of the U.S. population. Blacks, by comparison, make up about 13 percent.

Convincing the masses that stereotyping Native Americans as savage, ignorant or humorless is insulting to them has been a slow movement, scholars say, and one they aren’t sure will gain steam.

Throughout America’s history, people have donned redface, worn fringe and feathers, and spoken in broken English as they “played” or portrayed Native Americans in theater, film and everyday life. In one of the earliest examples, colonists dressed as Mohawk Indians dumped tea into the Boston harbor in 1773 in protest of British rule.

‘Playing Indian’

Early settlers wanted to take what they saw as the best values of Native Americans while simultaneously seizing the land and destroying tribal communities, scholars say. Part of that was a desire to be seen as indigenous to the new land. Secret societies based on Native American symbols, customs and terminology formed and still exist, such as the Improved Order of Red Men and the Boy Scouts’ Order of the Arrow.

Waves of Jewish immigrants in the early 1900s sought to align themselves with Native Americans, whom they saw as fellow displaced people, dressing up as and singing songs about being Native American while belittling them to be socially accepted, said Peter Antelyes, an associate professor in English and Jewish studies at Vassar College.

Philip J. Deloria, a Harvard University history professor and author of “Playing

Indian,” said Native Americans also were hypersexualized and depicted as cannibals. One famous political cartoon shows European nations lifting up the skirt of a Native American woman to reveal the newfound land, suggesting both were open to the desires of men, he said.

“The Last of the Mohicans,” published in 1826, furthered those depictions and stereotypes, as did Buffalo Bill’s “Wild West” shows, Deloria said.

Some actors later playing Native Americans made it their real-life image. Italian-American actor Iron Eyes Cody was well-known in Indian Country for a 1971 environmental ad in which he shed a single tear after paddling through a river littered with trash. He wore fringed buckskin and had a feather in his long, braided hair.

Most people think those images, largely based on 19th-century Plains Indians, are who Native Americans were and still are, Deloria said. And some believe Natives went extinct.

“There’s a big, long, complicated history to this that’s really deep in American culture,” Deloria said. “It’s every bit as deep as blackface and slavery. It’s just out there, but we’ve kind of forgotten about it.”

Nowhere is redface more prominent than at sporting events featuring teams with Native American mascots like the Redskins, Braves and Indians, and around Halloween.

‘More Than a Word’

In the documentary “More Than a Word” about the Washington Redskins, fans say the team name honors Native Americans. Stadiums today are dotted with fans who paint their faces, perform their versions of a Native American dance or war cry, and wear toy or replica headdresses that are mass-produced.

It’s insulting to many Native Americans because headdresses, historically, were a symbol of honor and respect, earned by tribal chiefs and warriors, they say. Modern-day veterans and leaders sometimes are gifted them in ceremonies and honored with the right to wear them.

“It’s easy to do the comparison: If this was blackface, it wouldn’t be tolerable,” said Little, who co-directed the documentary. “But that also discredits it because you are comparing issues in two separate races and two distinct people.”

Nicholee Deschine Parkhurst, who is Lakota and Navajo, has been trying to take companies to task for misappropriating Native American culture and to highlight indigenous people in a more contemporary way. “When you’re viewed in that way, as only existing in the past, as the ‘frozen Indian’ found in museums ... It makes it harder for voices of leaders in our communities to actually be heard, and it’s easier for people to ignore us,” she said.

“There’s a big, long, complicated history to this that’s really deep in American culture. It’s every bit as deep as blackface and slavery.”

Philip J. Deloria

Harvard University history professor and author of “Playing Indian”

WORLD

Defiant vigil starts healing in New Zealand after massacre

Associated Press

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand — They came together as one, more than 1,000 students from rival Christchurch schools and different religions, joining voices to honor the 50 lives lost in a massacre that has deeply wounded the cozy New Zealand city.

In a park across from the Al Noor mosque, where dozens were killed by a white supremacist gunman, the students sat on the grass in Monday's fading daylight, lifting flickering candles to the sky as they sang a traditional Maori song.

Hundreds then stood to perform a passionate, defiant haka, the famed ceremonial dance of the indigenous Maori people.

For many, joining the vigil for the victims of the mass shooting was a much-needed opportunity to soothe their minds after a wrenching few days.

Most of the students spent hours locked down in their schools on



Students react at the vigil.

Friday as police tried to determine if any other shooters were involved in the attacks.

Those at the vigil told harrowing tales of being forced to hide under classroom tables or on a school stage behind a curtain, of being instructed not to speak and to urinate in a bucket rather than risk leaving the classroom for a bathroom.

Sarah Liddell, 17, said many of her peers have felt intense anxiety since the attack. There was a sense of safety in coming together

on Monday, she said.

"I feel like it's just really important to show everyone that one act of violence doesn't define a whole city," she said. "This is one of the best ways to show everyone coming together. Some schools have little funny rivalries, but in times like this, we all just come together and that's all forgotten."

The students draped a fence along the park with chains of colorful paper notes, each emblazoned with messages of love and hope and sorrow: "You are not alone." "This is your home. You are part of us." "We all bleed the same colour."

After the ceremony officially ended, many lingered, standing in circles, arms draped around each other's shoulders, singing Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah" and Maori songs. People wandered around with "free hugs" signs, embracing those in need. There were tears, but also smiles.

The students' vigil was a striking



PHOTOS BY VINCENT YU/AP

Students light candles Monday at a vigil for victims of Friday's shooting outside the Al Noor mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand.

and healing counterpoint to Monday's developments in the mass shooting. A Christchurch gun shop acknowledged selling guns online to the white supremacist accused of killing 50 people in shootings at two mosques that have upended New Zealand's reputation as one of the world's most tolerant and safe nations.

At a news conference, Gun City owner David Tipple said the store sold four guns and ammunition to Brenton Harrison Tarrant, 28, through a "police-verified online

mail-order process." The store "detected nothing extraordinary" about the buyer, he said.

Separately, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said gun law reforms would be announced within 10 days and an inquiry conducted into intelligence and security services that failed to detect the risk from the attacker or his plans. There have been concerns intelligence agencies were overly focused on the Muslim community in detecting and preventing security risks.

Shooting: Incident occurred at busy neighborhood intersection

FROM FRONT PAGE

A few hours after the shooting, Utrecht police released a photo of a 37-year-old Turkish-born man they identified as Gokmen Tanis and said he was "associated with the incident." The photo showed a bearded man aboard a tram in a blue hooded top.

Authorities reduced the threat level in Utrecht back to four out of five following the arrest of the suspect.

The Netherlands' counterterrorism coordinator announced the scaling down of the threat level in a tweet Monday evening. A level four terrorism alert is in line with the rest of the Netherlands.

The attack came three days after 50 people were killed when an immigrant-hating white supremacist opened fire at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, during Friday prayers. There was no immediate indication of any link between the two events.

Utrecht Mayor Jan van Zanen

said three people were killed, and police put the number of wounded at five.

"We cannot exclude, even stronger, we assume a terror motive. Likely there is one attacker, but there could be more," van Zanen said earlier Monday.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said that "a terror motive is not excluded" and that the attack was met throughout the country with "a mix of disbelief and disgust."

"If it is a terror attack, then we have only one answer: Our nation, democracy, must be stronger than fanaticism and violence," he added.

The shooting took place at a busy intersection in a residential neighborhood.

Police erected a white tent over an area where a body appeared to be lying next to the tram. Anti-terrorism officers gathered in front of an apartment building close to the scene.

A dog wearing a vest with a camera mounted on it also was



PETER DEJONG/AP

The body of one of three victims lies next to a tram after a shooting incident in Utrecht, Netherlands, on Monday.

seen outside the building.

In neighboring Germany, police said they stepped up surveillance of the Dutch border, watching not only major highways but also minor crossings

and train routes.

German authorities said they were initially told to look out for a red Renault Clio compact car but were later informed it had been found abandoned in Utrecht.

Iranians are urged to put curse on US

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran's president on Monday urged Iranians to put a curse on the United States, Israel and Saudi Arabia, reiterating his long-standing charge that the U.S. and its allies are responsible for the country's ailing economy.

President Hassan Rouhani's remarks were meant to deflect criticism of his administration's performance amid a spiraling economy after President Donald Trump last year pulled America out of the nuclear deal and reimposed sanctions on Tehran, targeting Iran's vital oil sector.

"Put all your curses on those who created the current situation," Rouhani urged Iranians, adding that "the United States, the Zionists," and Saudi Arabia were to blame. He didn't say what kind of curses the Iranians should invoke.

The U.S. plan, Rouhani claimed, was to "dominate" the Iranian nation, something Washington will not achieve.

On Sunday, the same day he inaugurated a new phase in the development of a massive natural gas field, Rouhani said Iran's inflation is "above 20 percent" and that this country of 80 million people has more than 3 million unemployed.

He promised to increase wages in both the government and the private sector and raise pensions.

The crisis that is gripping Iran has hurt ordinary Iranians and emboldened Rouhani's critics to openly call for his ouster.

UK speaker stymies May's bid for 3rd vote on Brexit deal

Associated Press

LONDON — The speaker of Britain's House of Commons dealt a potentially fatal blow to Prime Minister Theresa May's ailing Brexit deal on Monday, saying the government couldn't keep asking lawmakers to vote on the same deal they have already rejected twice.

The government intends to try

a third time to get lawmakers to back the deal, ideally before May joins European Union leaders Thursday at a Brussels summit where she is set to ask the bloc to postpone Brexit's departure. May has warned opponents that failure to approve the deal would mean a long, and possibly indefinite, delay to Brexit.

Speaker John Bercow said Monday that centuries-old parliament

ary rules prevent a motion being brought back repeatedly for votes in the same session of Parliament. He said the government could not "resubmit to the House the same proposition or substantially the same proposition."

He said a new motion would have to be "fundamentally different. Not different in terms of wording but different in terms of substance."

May has said that if her deal is approved, she will ask EU leaders to extend the Brexit deadline until June 30 so Parliament has time to approve the necessary legislation. If it isn't, she will have to seek a longer extension that would mean Britain participating in May 23-26 elections for the European Parliament — something the government is keen to avoid.

WORLD

Nearly 80 people dead in Indonesia earthquake, flood

By JEFFREY PATTIRAJAWANE
Associated Press

JAYAPURA, Indonesia — The number of people killed after torrential downpours triggered flash floods and mudslides that tore through mountainside villages in Indonesia's easternmost province has climbed to 79, with dozens of others missing, officials said Monday.

On Sunday, the disaster-prone country was hit by an earthquake, triggering a landslide that hit a popular waterfall on the tourist island of Lombok, killing at least three people and damaging hundreds of homes.

The worst-hit area from the flooding was Sentani subdistrict, where tons of mud, rocks and trees from a landslide on a mountain early Sunday rolled down to a river that burst its banks, sweeping away residents, National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho told a news conference in the capital, Jakarta.

Floodwaters and landslides destroyed roads and bridges in several areas of Papua province's Jayapura district following days of torrential rains, hampering rescue efforts, Nugroho said.

"The combination of natural factors and human activities has caused this fatal disaster," he said.

Nugroho said 79 bodies had been pulled from the mud and wreckage of crumpled homes by Sunday. Another 74 people were hospitalized, many with broken bones and head wounds.

"We are overwhelmed by too many injuries," said Haerul Lee, the head of the Jayapura health office, adding that some medical facilities had been hit by power outages. "We can't handle it alone."

Papua military spokesman Col. Muhammad Aidi said rescuers saved two injured infants who had been trapped for more than six hours. The parents of one of the babies were washed away and died.



TUMBUK GULTON/AP

Indonesian police and soldiers search for residents who need assistance in a flooded neighborhood in Sentani, Papua province, Indonesia, on Monday.

Nugroho said rescuers evacuated more than 4,200 people to temporary shelters as more than 600 houses and buildings were damaged and submerged.

Seasonal downpours cause frequent landslides and floods and kill dozens each year in In-

donesia, a chain of 17,000 islands where millions of people live in mountainous areas or near fertile flood plains.

Meanwhile, a moderately strong earthquake triggered a landslide on Lombok island Sunday. The U.S. Geological Survey said the quake had a magnitude of 5.5 and struck at a depth of 15 miles.

Sunday's quake triggered a landslide from Mount Rinjani and hit dozens of tourists at the Tiu

Kelep waterfall in the foothills of the active volcano, said Nugroho, the disaster agency spokesman.

Two Malaysians and a 14-year-old Indonesian boy were killed in the landslide, Nugroho said.

He said rescuers managed to evacuate 22 Malaysians and 14 Indonesians from the waterfall site, and 56 others — mostly local surveyors from government institutions, the military and the police — from the mountainous area.

Mozambican leader: Cyclone death toll may be above 1K

By ANDREW MELDRUM
Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG — Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi says more than 1,000 may have been killed by Cyclone Idai, which many say is the worst in more than 20 years.

Speaking to state Radio Mozambique, Nyusi said Monday that although the official death count is currently 84, he believes the toll will be more than 1,000.

"It appears that we can register more than 1,000 deaths," said the president, adding that more than 19,000 people are at risk.

"The waters of the Pungue and Buzi rivers overflowed, making whole villages disappear and isolating communities, and bodies are floating," said Nyusi. "It is a real disaster of great proportions."

Nyusi spoke after flying by helicopter over the central port city of Beira and the rural Manica and Sofala provinces in which he saw widespread flooding and devastation.

Other officials in emergency services cautioned that while they expect the death toll to rise significantly, they have no way of knowing if they will reach the president's estimate of 1,000.



CAROLINE HAGA, INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES/AP

An aerial view from a helicopter on Monday shows flooding in Beira, Mozambique.

The Red Cross said that 90 percent of Beira, a city of 500,000, had been damaged or destroyed.

Beira has been severely battered by the cyclone, which cut off electricity, forced the airport to shut down and closed road access to the city, said the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies on Monday.

Cyclone Idai first hit Beira last week and then moved inland, spreading heavy winds and rainfall to Zimbabwe and Malawi. More than 215 people have been killed by the storm, according to official figures in the three countries, hundreds more are missing and more than 1.5 million people have been affected, according to the Red Cross and government officials.

The scale of the damage to Beira is "massive and horrifying," said Jamie LeSueur, who led

a Red Cross aerial assessment of the city. The team had to view the city by helicopter because roads were flooded, he said.

"The situation is terrible. The scale of devastation is enormous. It seems that 90 percent of the area is completely destroyed," said LeSueur.

While the physical impact of Idai is beginning to emerge, the human impact is unclear.

"Almost everything is destroyed," LeSueur said. "Communication lines have been completely cut and roads have been destroyed. Some affected communities are not accessible."

"Beira has been severely battered. But we are also hearing that the situation outside the city could be even worse. Yesterday (Sunday), a large dam burst and cut off the last road to the city."

UK police say stabbing was far-right terrorism

Associated Press

LONDON — British police say a stabbing west of London in which a man attacked a teenager with a baseball bat and knife while hurling racist abuse is being treated as a terrorist incident "inspired by the far-right."

A 50-year-old man from the village of Stanwell, near Heathrow Airport, was arrested Saturday on suspicion of attempted murder

and racially aggravated public order offenses. A 19-year-old man was taken to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

Neil Basu, head of counter-terrorism policing, said Sunday that while the investigation was just beginning, the incident had "hallmarks of a terror event." He added, "Police are committed to tackling all forms of toxic extremist ideology."

Japan to make crater, collect sample from inside asteroid

Associated Press

TOKYO — Japan's space agency said Monday that its Hayabusa2 spacecraft will follow up last month's touchdown on a distant asteroid with another risky mission — to drop an explosive to make a crater and collect underground samples to get possible clues to the origin of the solar system.

Hayabusa2 made history on Feb. 22 when it successfully touched down on the boulder-rich asteroid, where it also collected some surface fragments.

The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency said Hayabusa2 is to

drop a copper impactor the size of a baseball and weighing 4.4 pounds on the asteroid on April 5 to collect samples from deeper underground where they had not been exposed to the sun or space rays.

The new mission will require an immediate evacuation of the spacecraft to the other side of the asteroid so it won't get hit by flying shards from the blast, JAXA said.

The mission will allow JAXA scientists to analyze details of a crater to find out the history of the asteroid, said Koji Wada, who is in charge of the project.

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Trained dogs to help round up rare turtles

IA IOWA CITY — Specially trained dogs from Montana are coming to Iowa to help round up a rare and threatened turtle species.

The Iowa City Press-Citizen reported that the Bur Oak Land Trust is coordinating the project this spring to help gather the ornate box turtle, Iowa's only native terrestrial turtle.

The turtles are listed as "threatened" in Iowa, and the trust wants to preserve a small population in Johnson County.

The trust is bringing in John Rucker, a Montana dog trainer and turtle expert, along with his Boykin spaniels.

Caged dogs in garage at cemetery rescued

MI ROSEVILLE — Police in suburban Detroit said 33 dogs were rescued from a garage in a cemetery.

Roseville police said a woman, 51, living in a home next to the garage told officers she was operating a rescue nearby before recently moving the dogs to the Roseville location. She said the garage was serving as temporary quarters for the dogs.

Police said they were alerted to the situation Saturday by a passer-by. They said the dogs were held in various cages and needed immediate attention due to conditions at the garage.

Police didn't identify the woman or say if she'll face criminal charges.

Owner of 'Flintstone House' sued by town

CA HILLSBOROUGH — A San Francisco Bay Area town is suing the owner of the quirky "Flintstone House," alleging she violated local codes when she put dinosaur sculptures in the backyard and made other landscaping changes that caused local officials to declare it a public nuisance.

The town of Hillsborough filed a complaint last week against Florence Fang, a media mogul who purchased the orange-and-purple, bulbous-shaped house in 2017. She began installing the large metal sculptures, a sign in the driveway that reads, "Yabba Dabba Doo," figurines of characters from "The Flintstones" animated sitcom, a staircase, a parking strip, a deck and other additions to the front and backyard.

Fang is a former publisher of The San Francisco Examiner. Her grandson said in a statement that his grandfather "will fight to save the Flintstone House."

South American lizard showing up in state

GA SAVANNAH — A South American lizard could be establishing a breeding population in south Georgia, state wildlife officials say.

The lizards — known as tegus — can grow up to 4 feet long. Talk of large, odd-looking lizards has been circulating in east-



WARREN DILLAWAY, THE (ASHTABULA, OHIO) STAR-BEACON/AP

Creating 'A Seuss Sensation'

Molly Theil, assistant youth services coordinator at Conneaut Public Library, as Thing 1, and Amanda Latva, youth services coordinator at CPL, face not shown, "shishikabob" Brian Daubenspect, 6, of Dorset Township during "A Seuss Sensation" at Ashtabula Towne Square on Saturday in Ashtabula Township, Ohio. The event was sponsored by area literacy groups and libraries throughout the county.

Tiny town to celebrate smelt with fish fry bash

ME COLUMBIA FALLS — A tiny town in Downeast Maine will once again welcome hundreds of people this year to celebrate a little fish and the arrival of spring.

Organizers of the Downeast Salmon Federation's Annual Smelt Fry and Fisheries Celebration say this year's event will take place on April 13.

The festival includes activities and displays about fisheries and

conservation, and it's also a celebration of local food.

Cops: Person in unicorn costume robs store

MD BALDWIN — Apparently not all unicorns are the embodiment of purity and grace.

Baltimore County Police said a person dressed in a unicorn costume and wielding a crowbar tried to rob a convenience store Saturday morning in the Baldwin community.

THE CENSUS

10K The number of columns about the game of bridge an Alabama man

has written. They have been published in more than 100 newspapers nationwide, including such publications as The Washington Post, the Los Angeles Times and The Boston Globe. The Tuscaloosa (Ala.) News reported that columnist Frank Stewart has also written 24 books about bridge.

Stewart remains one of a handful of syndicated newspaper columnists nationwide who write exclusively about the game.

Officers arrived just after the High's store opening time of 5 a.m. to respond to the robbery call. Police said the suspect fled in a silver car. They located what appeared to be the same car after it had wrecked.

Police said two people involved in the crash were taken to a hospital, and detectives are working to determine what their involvement was in the robbery.

No charges were immediately filed. Police didn't say if money or merchandise was taken in the robbery.

Naked man confronts, robs random woman

PA LOWER BURRELL — Authorities said a naked man attacked and robbed a woman he encountered on a street.

Lower Burrell police said officers encountered city resident Robert E. Brown, 48, late Wednesday night after he allegedly ripped off the woman's sweatshirt, causing minor injuries. A witness told them Brown had accused the woman of an improper action from his childhood, even though they had never met.

Brown ran off but was soon found sitting on the porch of a vacant house. He then kicked in the front door and ran into the empty home but eventually surrendered without incident.

Police said Brown was found wearing the sweatshirt that he ripped from the female victim. He allegedly told officers he had been using various drugs.

Police charge bus driver with DUI after wreck

KY CRESTWOOD — Police in Kentucky charged a bus driver with drunken driving after a bus with 33 elementary school students on board crashed. No one was injured.

News outlets reported that Lesley Harvey, 54, was charged Friday with operating a vehicle under the influence of alcohol, failure to report an accident, leaving the scene of an accident and 33 counts of wanton endangerment.

The Oldham County Police Department said in a news release the bus carrying Crestwood Elementary School students hit a security barrier near a subdivision.

From wire reports

FACES

Gunn back as 'Guardians' director

By MICHAEL CAVNA
The Washington Post

"Guardians of the Galaxy: Vol. 3" would have been a tall order for anyone but franchise filmmaker James Gunn to direct. Now, a year after Disney fired Gunn over his social media activity, the studio has rehired him to make the third "Guardians" film, according to the Hollywood trades.

Gunn's return was reportedly paved by meetings with Walt Disney Studios Chairman Alan Horn. Deadline, which was first to report the news March 15, said the decision was "actually made months ago."

"I deeply appreciate Disney's decision,

and I am excited to continue making films that investigate the ties of love that bind us all," Gunn tweeted.

Gunn was fired last summer after old, offensive tweets about rape and pedophilia were resurfaced online by critics on the political right. The filmmaker, who had guided the first two "Guardians" movies to success — the movies grossed a combined \$1.6 billion worldwide — apologized for the tweets, which he called attempted jokes.

In July, Horn said in a statement: "The offensive attitudes and statements discovered on James' Twitter feed are indefensible and inconsistent with our studio's values, and we have severed our business

relationship with him."

But much of the "Guardians" cast signed an open letter last year seeking Gunn's rehiring; Dave Bautista, who plays Drax, was especially vocal in his support of Gunn, as a #WeAreGroot campaign gained traction.

"I am tremendously grateful to every person out there who has supported me over the past few months," Gunn tweeted. "I am always learning and will continue to work at being the best human being I can be."

Gunn had recently been announced as the director of DC's "Suicide Squad 2."

"Guardians of the Galaxy 3" was originally slated for a 2020 release.



James Gunn



DISNEY-MARVEL STUDIOS/AP

Brie Larson and Samuel L. Jackson star in "Captain Marvel," which has reached a global total of \$760 million in two weeks, already eclipsing the totals of several other recent superhero films.

'Captain Marvel' soars higher with stellar second weekend

From wire services

"Captain Marvel" continued to dominate the global box office in its second weekend in theaters. Walt Disney Studios estimated Sunday that the intergalactic superhero fell only 55 percent from its record-breaking opening. The film earned an additional \$69.3 million from North American theaters and \$119.7 million internationally, bringing its global grosses to \$760 million.

With Brie Larson in the title role, "Captain Marvel" has already surpassed the lifetime grosses of a slew of superhero films including "Justice League," "Captain America: The Winter Soldier" and "The Amazing Spider-Man."

In a very distant second, the animated "Wonder Park" struggled with \$16 million against a reported \$100 million budget. The PG-rated pic about a girl who dreams up an amusement park did not score well with critics either — it's currently sitting at a 30 percent on Rotten Tomatoes.

At No. 3, "Five Feet Apart" debuted with \$13.1 million. The tear-jerker romance follows two teenage cystic fibrosis sufferers who meet and fall in love but are forbidden to touch.

In fourth place, "How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World" added \$9.3 million in its fourth weekend for a cumulative \$135.6 million. It has grossed \$466.5 million worldwide.

"Tyler Perry's A Madea Family Funeral" added \$8 million in its third weekend for a cumulative \$59 million for fifth place.

DeGrasse Tyson will return to TV

Astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson will return to the air on two TV shows that had been put on hold for a sexual misconduct investigation.

The National Geographic Channel said in a statement March 15 that Tyson's "StarTalk" will return to the air in April with the 13 episodes that remain in the season. The statement says Tyson's

other show, "Cosmos," will return on National Geographic TV and Fox at a date to be determined.

Last November, National Geographic Networks and Fox said they would examine reports that Tyson behaved in a sexually inappropriate manner toward two women. The latest statement did not address the complaints or investigation. Tyson said in December that he denied the allegations.

Netflix will cut 'Bird Box' footage

Netflix will remove footage of a real fiery train disaster from its hit post-apocalyptic survival film "Bird Box" months after the streaming giant was criticized for exploiting a tragedy.

The stock footage was taken from a 2013 crash in the Quebec town of Lac-Mégantic when a train carrying crude oil came off the tracks and exploded into a massive ball of fire, killing 47 people.

Netflix licensed the footage from the stock image vendor Pond 5 and used it in "Bird Box" in an early TV news montage.

Pond 5 in January said the footage "was taken out of context" and apologized. But Netflix said at the time it wasn't planning to cut the clip.

Netflix changed its mind and said March 15 that it will replace the footage with an outbreak from a former TV series in the U.S. The company said it is "sorry for any pain caused to the Lac-Mégantic community."

Other news

■ The Hollywood Foreign Press Association says next year's **Golden Globe Awards** will be held Jan. 5. The ceremony will kick off a condensed awards season with the Oscars moving up their ceremony to Feb. 9, 2020.

■ W.S. Mervin, a prolific and versatile poetry master who evolved through a wide range of styles, died March 15. He was 91.

'King of the Surf Guitar,' 'Miserlou' composer dies

By LINDSEY BAHR
AND JOHN ROGERS

Associated Press

Dick Dale, whose pounding, blaringly loud power chord instrumentals on songs like "Miserlou" and "Let's Go Trippin'" earned him the title King of the Surf Guitar, has died at age 81.

His former bassist, Sam Bolle, said Dale died March 16. No other details were available, but Dale had been ill for several years and was twice treated for cancer.

His musical influence was profound and included guitar virtuoso Jimi Hendrix, Eddie Van Halen and Stevie Ray Vaughan as well as director Quentin Tarantino, who featured Dale's "Miserlou," in the opening titles of his 1994 film "Pulp Fiction." That helped pull the guitarist back into the pop-culture spotlight.

Dale's influence also extended to current musical stars.

"I spent many moments learning his massive reverberated guitar licks in my bedroom, and still enjoy playing his song 'Nitro' whenever I can," Jack White wrote on the Instagram feed of his Third Man Records.

Dale liked to say it was he and not the Beach Boys who invented surf music — and some critics have said he was right.

"Dale pioneered a musical genre that Beach Boy Brian Wilson and others would later bring to fruition," Rolling Stone magazine said in its obituary. "Media of Rock & Roll," adding "Let's Go Trippin'" was released in 1961, two months ahead of the Beach Boys' first hit, "Surferin'."

The magazine called Dale's song "the harbinger of the '60s surf rock craze."

An avid surfer, Dale started building a devoted Los Angeles fan base in the late 1950s with repeated appearances at Newport Beach's old Rendezvous Ballroom. He played "Miserlou," "The Wedge," "Night Rider" and other compositions at wall-rattling volume on a custom-made Fender Stratocaster.

"Miserlou," which became his signature song, was adapted from a Middle Eastern folk tune Dale heard as a child and later transformed into a thundering surf-rock instrumental.



AP

Dick Dale, shown in 2007

His style was so frenetic that he shredded guitar picks during songs, a technique that forced him to stash spares on his guitar's body. "Better shred than dead," he liked to joke, an expression that became the title of a 1997 anthology released by Rhino Records.

Dale said he developed his musical style when he sought to merge the sounds of the crashing ocean waves he heard while surfing with melodies inspired by the rockabilly music he loved.

Dale pounded rather than plucked the strings of his guitar in a style he said he borrowed from an early musical hero, the great jazz drummer Gene Krupa.

Although popular around Southern California, Dale might have remained just a cult figure if surfing had not exploded in worldwide popularity during his peak creative years.

When the first of a series of "Beach Party" movies made to cash in on the phenomenon was released in 1963, it included Dick Dale and the Del-Tones performing "Secret Surfing Spot" as teen heartthrob Annette Funicello danced on the beach. Dale had released his first album, "Surfer's Choice," a year earlier. He followed it with four more over the next two years while appearing in other surfer movies.

His star dimmed after the Beatles' British invasion onto the pop charts in 1964. His career also was sidelined by a battle with cancer in the 1960s and a serious foot infection in the 1970s that was the result of a surfing injury.

SHIFTING GEARS

On and off road



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NISSAN/TNS

Beefy 2019 Nissan Titan XD Pro-4X designed for the highway or the trail

By G. CHAMBERS WILLIAMS III
Fort Worth (Texas) Star-Telegram

The first version of the new generation of Nissan's full-size Titan pickup arrived for 2016, much bigger and bolder than its predecessor — and sporting a whopper of a Cummins diesel engine, a first for the Titan.

A few months later, a smaller, lighter version of the new Titan arrived, with a choice of V-6 or V-8 gasoline engines, using a different chassis that's 14.7 inches shorter than that of the XD. Both the XD and the smaller Titan half-ton (1500) models come in three configurations: Single Cab, King Cab and Crew Cab.

Now for 2019, the beefy XD — the only heavy-duty pickup offered by a non-Detroit automaker — has a starting price of \$32,890 (plus \$1,395 freight) for the base Single Cab model with rear-wheel drive and a 5.6-liter gasoline V-8 engine, or \$38,520 for the same model with the 5.0-liter Cummins diesel.

The 2019 Titan XD tops out at \$65,310 for the fanciest and best-equipped version, the Platinum four-wheel drive with the diesel.

New for 2019 in the XD is a seven-inch touch-screen audio/IT display with NissanConnect, featuring Apple CarPlay and Android Auto now standard on all models, Nissan says. Payload has been increased to a maximum of 2,990 pounds.

Also new is a Fender Premium Audio System, which is included on Crew Cab SL and Platinum trim levels and optional on the Pro-4X Crew Cab and King Cab. The system has a 485-watt, nine-channel amplifier and 12 speakers. It was included on our tester as part of the Pro-4X Utility Package (\$1,445), which also brought the Utili-track cargo tie-down system, front and rear sonar parking aids, tailgate-area lighting, power-sliding rear window with defroster, electronic-locking tailgate, rear utility bed step,

and under-rail LED cargo-bed lighting.

Other XD changes for 2019 include the Rear Door Alert system, which reminds drivers to check the back seat after the vehicle is parked, now standard on all King Cab and Crew Cab models.

Nissan says the XD is somewhere between the standard light-duty (half-ton) pickup class — such as the Silverado 1500 and F-150 — and the heavy-duty models (three-quarter-ton) such as the F-250/350,

Ram 2500/3500 and Silverado 2500.

But Nissan believes that having two sizes of big pickups, even if the bigger one isn't quite in the HD class, will allow it to reach 85 percent of the pickup consumer market. Toyota does not yet have such a two-model strategy for its full-size Tundra.

Driving this behemoth around felt like I was in one of the Silverado or F-series heavy-duty trucks. Ram's 1500 has been bigger than the others in the light-duty segment for some time, so the Titan XD feels more like a Ram 1500 than it does a Silverado 1500 or F-150.

As a longtime owner of the previous-generation Titan four-wheel-drive Crew Cab model, I can tell you this truck is nothing like the first generation, which was one of my favorite personal pickups, especially for the off-road exploring that has long been my passion.

It has shift-on-the-fly four-wheel drive with low-range gearing, Hill Start and Hill Descent assist, an electronic locking rear differential, and 18-inch alloy wheels with dark paint finish. A full-size spare tire is included — a must for trail driving.

The Titan XD should please consumers who crave beefy pickups, and the 5.0-liter Cummins engine will satisfy most everyone's power needs. Of course, keep in mind that this is still not an F-series Super Duty, Ram HD or Silverado HD, so it doesn't have quite the trailer-towing capabilities some of those three-quarter-ton trucks can offer with their diesels.

Negotiating tight shopping center parking lots and downtown parking spaces is more challenging in the XD than in the previous generation Titan, and the turning radius is a bit wider.

But other than having to negotiate tight parking spots because of its larger size, this truck was fun to drive, and quite powerful. It can get up to speed and beyond very quickly.

The engine and the six-speed Aisin automatic transmission work smoothly together for the most part, but there were some shifts that seemed slightly out of sync. And sometimes the diesel engine got a bit noisy inside the cab — especially when the transmission seemed to hold a bit too long in a lower gear during hard acceleration. Most people won't care about that noise, but my front-seat passenger occasionally found it annoying.

The interior of this truck is designed to feel more like that of a luxury sedan, with very comfortable bucket seats up front, and a quite roomy rear bench seat that genuinely gave three adults plenty of leg, knee and headroom. The roof is so high that you can even wear a cowboy hat while you're driving the Titan XD, so that's certainly a plus in Texas.

Front and rear are Nissan's NASA-inspired Zero Gravity seats, designed to be more ergonomic than standard seats, allowing for a comfortable ride, especially on long trips.

The large center console can serve as a mobile workstation. With the new Titan design, the shifter was moved to the steering column to free up storage space in the console, which includes two decent cup holders.

We had both a rearview camera and the Around View monitor showing up in the large color dash screen that also served the navigation and audio systems. With a truck this size, the Around View monitor is a great help when backing up in a crowded parking lot or while trying to line the vehicle up with a trailer.

No EPA fuel-economy estimates are available for the Titan XD, as it's exempt from the rules because of its size. But we averaged just under 18 mpg during our weeklong test, which was about two-thirds highway driving.

2019 Nissan Titan XD Crew Cab Pro-4X



Highs: Comes with a powerful Cummins V-8 diesel engine, King or Crew cab body with four doors, and a long list of standard or optional equipment.

Lows: Somewhat noisy diesel engine, particularly during hard acceleration.

Vehicle type: Heavy-duty pickup
Base price: \$32,890-\$54,730 (plus \$1,395 freight)

Price as tested: \$62,940 (including freight and options) (2019 Titan XD Pro-4X Diesel Crew Cab)

Powertrain: 5.0-liter Cummins turbocharged diesel V-8

Transmission: Six-speed automatic

Power/torque: 310 horsepower/555 foot-pounds

EPA fuel economy rating: Not available — vehicle is exempt

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OPINION

Sparks of 2nd Arab Spring starting to fly

By JACKSON DIEHL

The Washington Post

The images of mass protests in Arab capitals, where demonstrators are demanding that corrupt and aging rulers step down, may look anachronistic. Wasn't the Arab Spring a few years ago? And didn't it end with coups and civil wars that restored the old autocratic status quo?

Well, yes and no. Yes, Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi is in the process of installing himself as dictator for life in Egypt; Bashar Assad reigns over the ruins of Syria; and the monarchies of the Persian Gulf, led by Saudi Arabia, are more brutally repressive than they have ever been. But in Algeria, popular demonstrations just forced President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to withdraw his bid for yet another term. And in Sudan, daily protests are persisting despite both concessions and violent repression by the regime of Omar Hassan al-Bashir. In Jordan, people marched across the country last month to protest corruption. In Morocco, a big rally for teachers a few weeks ago ended with chants to "end the dictatorship."

This is hot, at least yet, a second Arab Spring. No regime has fallen. In Algeria, the clique of generals, bureaucrats and business executives that propped up Bouteflika is still in control. Many who joined the revolutions of 2011 are dead, imprisoned or demoralized. "Many, including Egyptians, realize that the costs of another uprising would be high," said Michele Dunne, a scholar who foresaw the revolution in Cairo. "They are also less optimistic than they were in 2011 about what the ultimate results might be."

Still, the new wave of unrest points to a couple of conclusions that run counter to

the conventional wisdom in Washington — especially inside the Trump administration. First, as Dunne puts it, "The tinder again is quite dry in the region, and sparks are beginning to fly." And, second, the authoritarian restoration that was supposed to return political stability to the Arab Middle East and open the way to economic modernization has failed.

El-Sissi and Saudi Arabia's Mohammed bin Salman imagine they can pursue the model of capitalist autocracy modeled and promoted by China and Russia. But unlike Xi Jinping, they've been unable to deliver the economic goods. Corruption, heavy-handed state capitalism and sheer incompetence are driving away desperately needed foreign investment. The two regimes are wasting tens of billions of dollars on megaprojects such as new cities. El-Sissi's latest development initiative consisted of ordering that all brick buildings in Cairo be painted in a uniform color scheme.

In Algeria, similarly, an ossified regime has been at a loss to make up for declining oil and gas revenue. Foreign reserves have fallen by half since 2013, and unemployment has risen to 11 percent. It's twice that for young people, which is not surprising since two-thirds of Algeria's 42 million people are under the age of 30.

Much of the region is suffering from the same toxic mix of mismanagement and corruption. Far from flourishing along Chinese or even Russian lines, Arab societies are once again depressed and frustrated. Leslie Campbell, a veteran program officer at the National Democratic Institute, summed up the regional climate in a recent essay: "Anger over the arrogance and impunity of political, military and economic elites and over persistent governance failures, exacerbated by audacious corruption

and extravagant state spending, are reminiscent of the restive mood in 2010 and early 2011."

To be sure, the unrest extends to countries with more liberal political systems. Tunisia, the only country to emerge from the Arab Spring as a democracy, is plagued with strikes and demonstrations. Iraq suffered from riots last summer over shortages of electricity and water. Violent protests in the West Bank forced the resignation of the Palestinian Authority's prime minister in January.

Yet, as Campbell pointed out, these countries have "room for debate, some freedom of speech, and political institutions that — while far from perfect — can absorb and react to some of the demands for change." The unrest in Iraq was followed by a peaceful and democratic change of government, and the new prime minister and president are moderates committed to rooting out corruption and improving services. Iraq remains a far-from-stable country; it is still threatened by the Sunni extremists of Islamic State and Shiite militias loyal to Iran. But it looks good compared with Egypt and Saudi Arabia, where the only response to unrest, or even peaceful dissent, is brutal repression.

The Trump administration founded its Middle Eastern strategy on the autocracies. It bet that el-Sissi's Egypt and Mohammed bin Salman's Saudi Arabia would anchor a regional strategy aimed at countering Iran. The assumption is that their regimes offer stability. For that reason, the administration has made no attempt to restrain their repression. It follows that, if there is another Arab Spring, President Donald Trump will be one of the losers.

Jackson Diehl is deputy editorial page editor for The Washington Post.

Today's drug war more than just cartels at the border

By GEORGE F. WILL

Washington Post Writers Group

On Feb. 12, Joaquin Guzman Loera, aka "El Chapo," was convicted of multiple crimes related to running the Sinaloa drug cartel, Mexico's largest. Thirteen days before his conviction, authorities seized enough of the synthetic opioid fentanyl for 100 million lethal doses. It was hidden in a truck carrying cucumbers through the Nogales, Texas, port of legal entry. On Feb. 28, authorities at the port of Newark, N.J., searched a container ship that had arrived from Colombia found inside a container supposedly filled with dried fruit 3,200 pounds of cocaine, worth \$77 million on U.S. streets. This was two days after Don Winslow published "The Border," the final volume in his 1,900-page trilogy of novels ("The Power of the Dog" and "The Cartel") about the cartels and the U.S. "war on drugs." He could hardly have arranged a better launch for his book, which is already on best-seller lists.

His thesis is that the war on drugs resembles the Vietnam War in its futility and its collateral damage: More Mexicans, more than 250,000 of whom have died and another 40,000 who have disappeared, according to the Financial Times, in the past dozen years from violence associated with rivalrous cartels and law enforcement measures. Those endless photos of confiscated sacks of drugs do resemble old photos of dead Viet Cong — body counts of replaceable bodies. El Chapo, 61, will die in a U.S. "supermax" prison, and his incarceration

— he has been in custody since 2016 — will make no difference regarding drug flows.

The mayhem and sadism Winslow describes are, he says, derived from credible reports. Wonder what the Central Americans who trek through Mexico to the U.S. border are fleeing? Read Winslow's description of a 10-year-old Guatemalan living off a garbage dump, alert for trucks bringing garbage from the better neighborhoods.

Winslow might be right about sinister involvements of some U.S. financial institutions in handling the cartels' billions. He could, however, have omitted the thinly veiled — very thinly disguised President Donald Trump, and his son-in-law who knowingly uses cartel money to rescue himself from a bad Manhattan real estate bet. One reason to read fiction is to avoid reading about those people. However, the upward of \$40 billion in profits made from the \$150 billion U.S. market — 30 million consumers of illicit drugs — must go somewhere. First, to Mexico, "so much cash," Winslow says, "they don't even count it, they weigh it." But then where?

Every day 4,500 trucks pass, necessarily with usually minimal inspection, through three legal entry points along the U.S.-Mexico border. Any wall would be irrelevant to interrupting drug shipments. As is the strategy of bringing down cartel kingpins. The New York Times reported that in 2016 and 2017, when El Chapo was in custody, "Mexican heroin production increased by 37 percent and seizures of fentanyl in places like Nogales more than doubled."

"Supply side" attack on drugs is frustrated by, among other things, geo-

graphy and the torrent of south-north commerce. The "demand side" is frustrated by declining prices (the supply-side failure) for increasingly potent products, such as fentanyl, which has passed prescription opioids and heroin in overdose deaths. Made from chemicals, not crops, and patented almost 60 years ago, it is mixed with heroin for an extra kick — and if doses are not carefully calibrated, a lethal kick. Said New York University's Mark Ark. Kleiman: In 1979, a milligram of pure heroin sold for about \$9 in today's prices; today it costs less than 25 cents. "Fifty grams of fentanyl — just over an ounce and a half — has the punch of a kilogram of heroin, and it's way, way cheaper." Three hundred micrograms — "roughly the weight of a grain of table salt" — can kill. And dealers are not precise chemists.

"We have," Kleiman said, "about 30 times as many drug dealers behind bars today as we had in 1980," but today's dealers employ cellphones, texting, social media and home delivery. In the most recent Global Drug Survey, Kleiman said, "cocaine users around the world reported that their most recent cocaine order was delivered in less time, on average, than their most recent pizza order."

He notes that serious cultural change has taken 50 years regarding tobacco, yet it is "still much more widely used than any of the illicit drugs except for cannabis." And "the fentanyl aren't going to be the last class of purely synthetic and super-potent recreational chemicals; they're just the first." Worse: living through chemistry, even if it does advantage the crop-growing cartels of Winslow's epic.

Looking at the news

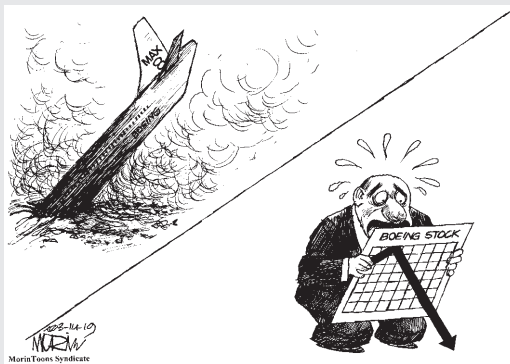
A weekly sampling of U.S. editorial cartoons



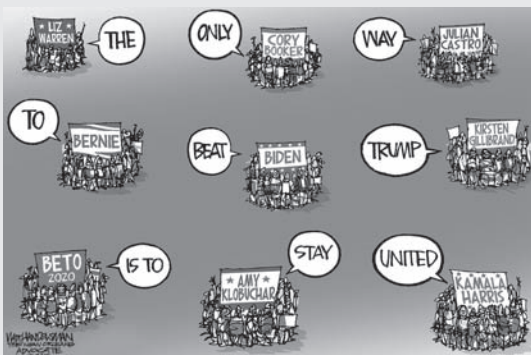
Lisa Benson/Washington Post Writers Group



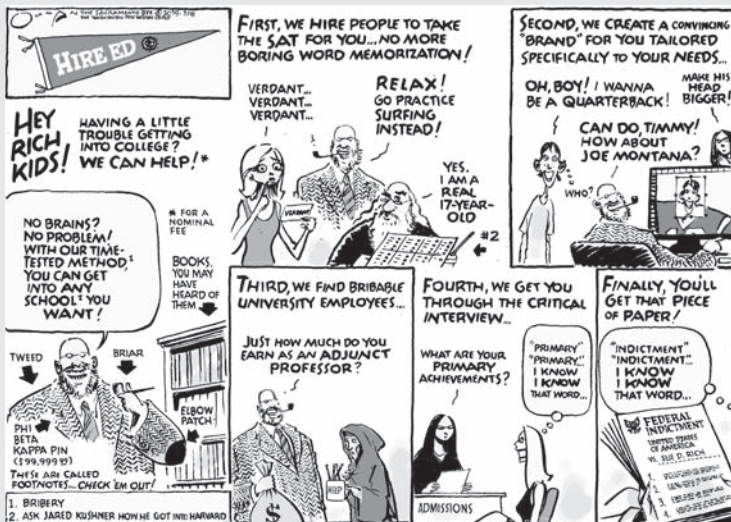
Jack Ohman/Washington Post Writers Group



Jim Morin/MorinToons Syndicate

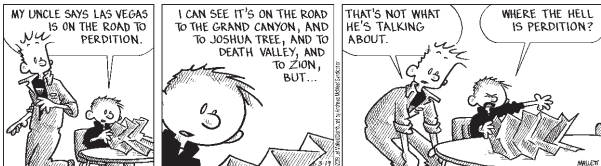


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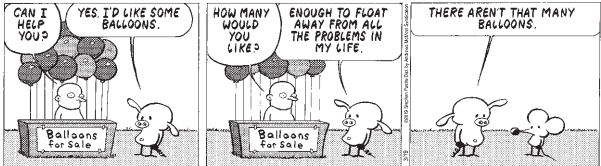
Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



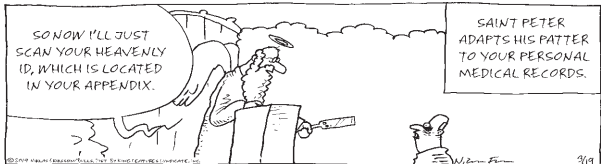
Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13			14			
15				16			17			
18				19			20			
		21				22				
23	24	25		26			27	28	29	
30				31			32			
33				34			35			
			36			37				
38	39	40		41			42	43	44	
45				46			47			
48				49			50			
51				52			53			

ACROSS

- 1 Swiss peaks
- 5 — roll (winning)
- 8 Lily variety
- 12 Not worth debating
- 13 Chest muscle
- 14 Here (Sp.)
- 15 Shop tools
- 17 Void partner
- 18 Chemical suffix
- 19 MGM motto start
- 20 Enlighten
- 21 Elev.
- 22 Petrol
- 23 Prima donnas
- 26 Thornton Wilder drama
- 30 B — boy
- 31 Grass shack
- 32 "Closer" actor Clive
- 33 "Blue Bloods" actress
- Moynahan
- 35 El Greco's birthplace
- 36 Sunbather's goal
- 37 Carrier to Amsterdam
- 38 Cabbage choice
- 41 Chairman of China
- 42 Persian, for one
- 45 Recognized
- 46 Sightseeing stop
- 48 Falco of "The Sopranos"

DOWN

- 22 Small wiper
- 22 Belly
- 23 Apply cream
- 24 Medit. nation
- 25 Half of XIV
- 26 Ump's call
- 27 Have bills
- 28 Drench
- 29 SSW opposite
- 31 Chick's mom
- 34 Carefree
- 35 LummoX
- 37 Rap star West
- 38 Distort
- 39 "The King —"
- 40 Bridal accessory
- 41 Oodles
- 42 Poet Sandburg
- 43 Basra resident
- 44 B'way booth sign
- 46 Legislation
- 47 CEO's deg.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

A	R	I	H	A	S	F	A	V	E
H	O	O	F	A	M	P	R	Y	A
A	L	T	I	T	I	O	E	E	L
B	L	A	S	T	D	O	M	E	
			H	A	G	L	O	A	F
S	A	F	A	R	I	S	I	N	A
P	L	A	N	N	A	Y	D	R	A
E	L	I	D	E	G	A	S	C	O
C	I	R	C	L	E	M	E	L	
			H	I	R	E	T	E	D
U	G	L	I	A	L	B	A	U	R
M	N	O	P	S	L	Y	R	A	N
P	U	G	S	E	E	E	L	O	S

3-19

CRYPTOQUIP

V L J D Y M W N I G U N O T I
V L N D P P N G D G M A N N T I
H P I H F P H U H S D P G ? A M S D B I M
G L M H Y V N Y T H I B I B D O O J
W D Y F H P D O .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN YOU ALWAYS GET THE UNCONTROLLABLE URGE TO CLIMB MOUNTAINS, I'D SAY YOU'RE DRAWN TO SCALE.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: V equals W

SCOREBOARD

Sports on AFD

Go to the American Forces Network website for the most up-to-date TV schedules.
myafn.net

Auto racing

Auto Club Cup

NASCAR Monster Energy Cup

At Auto Club Speedway

Race length: 125 miles

Starting position in parentheses

(1) Kyle Busch, Toyota, 200.
(2) (5) Joey Logano, Ford, 200.
(3) (13) Brad Keselowski, Ford, 200.

(4) (2) Kevin Harvick, Ford, 200.
(5) (10) Ryan Blaney, Ford, 200.
(6) (11) Denny Hamlin, Toyota, 200.

(7) (13) Martin Truex Jr., Toyota, 200.
(8) (6) Aric Almirola, Ford, 200.
(9) (1) Austin Dillon, Chevrolet, 200.

(10) (8) Chase Elliott, Chevrolet, 200.
(11) (5) Kyle Larson, Chevrolet, 200.
(12) (20) Daniel Suarez, Ford, 200.

(13) (12) Ricky Stenhouse Jr., Ford, 200.
(14) (11) William Byron, Chevrolet, 200.
(15) (14) Chris Buescher, Chevrolet, 200.

(16) (12) Jimmie Johnson, Chevrolet, 200.
(17) (6) Matt DiBenedetto, Toyota, 200.
(18) (24) Erik Jones, Toyota, 200.

(19) (25) Paul Menard, Ford, 200.
(20) (23) Alex Bowman, Chevrolet, 200.
(21) (19) Ryan Newman, Ford, 199.

(22) (6) Ryan Preece, Chevrolet, 199.
(23) (14) Michael McDowell, Toyota, 199.
(24) (19) David Ragan, Ford, 198.

(25) (22) Matt Tia, Ford, 197.
(26) (16) Ty Dillon, Chevrolet, 197.
(27) (15) Chase Christopher, Chevrolet, 195.

(28) (33) Landon Cassill, Chevrolet, 195.
(29) (38) Bubba Wallace, Chevrolet, 194.
(30) (20) Corey LaJoie, Ford, 193.

(31) (32) Cody Ware, Chevrolet, 192.
(32) (17) Daniel Hemric, Chevrolet, 192.
(33) (34) Reed Sorenson, Chevrolet, 192.

(34) (27) Gabe Hensley, Chevrolet, 188.
(35) (37) Garrett Smithley, Chevrolet, 188.
(36) (31) Mark Green, Ford, 172.

(37) Clint Bowyer, Ford, Overhauling.

RACE STATISTICS

Average Speed: Race Winner: 142.113 mph.

Time of Race: 2 hrs., 47 mins., 42 Secs.

Margin of Victory: 2.58 seconds.

Caution Flags: 9 for 22 laps.

Changes: 18 among 33 drivers.

Lap Leaders: A. Dillon, 40; Hamlin 1-2A.

1-2A. Hamlin, 10-12A; Busch, 13-16A; 30-3W.

Byron 31-33K; Busch 34-56B; Hamlin 57-59K.

Busch 60-69J; Logano 70-71K; 72-75K.

Busch 12-15K; Busch 16B; Keselowski 16B-16K.

Stenhouse Jr. 165K; Stenhouse Jr. 165K; 17-17K.

Busch 170-173K; Logano 174K; Busch 175-200.

Laps Led: Kyle Busch 7 times for 134 laps.

Logano 2 times for 42 laps; Hamlin 3 laps.

Logano 2 times for 3 laps; William Byron 1 time for 1 lap; Ryan Blaney 1 time for 1 lap.

Stenhouse Jr. 1 time for 1 lap.

Australian Grand Prix

Melbourne Grand Prix Circuit

Melbourne, Australia

1. Valtteri Bottas, Mercedes, 58 laps.
1:25:27.325, 26 points.

2. Lewis Hamilton, Mercedes, 58.
+20.886s, 18.

3. Sebastian Vettel, Red Bull Racing.
Honda, 58, +22.526s, 15.

4. Charles Leclerc, Ferrari, 58, +57.109s.

5. Kevin Magnussen, Haas Ferrari, 58, +57.156s, 8.

6. Nico Hulkenberg, Renault, 57, +1 lap.

7. Kimi Raikkonen, Alfa Romeo Racing.
Ferrari, 57, +1 lap.

8. Pierre Gasly, Scuderia Toro Rosso.
Honda, 57, +1 lap.

9. Lando Norris, McLaren Renault, 57, +1 lap.

10. Sergio Perez, Racing Point BWT.
Mercedes, 57, +1 lap.

11. Alexander Albon, Scuderia Toro Rosso.
Honda, 57, +1 lap.

12. Antonio Giovinazzi, Alfa Romeo Racing.
Ferrari, 57, +1 lap.

13. George Russell, Williams Mercedes, 56, +2 laps.

14. Robert Kubica, Williams Mercedes, 55, +3 laps.

Not classified

Romain Grosjean, Haas Ferrari, 29, did not finish.

Esteban Ocon, Renault, 28, did not finish.

Sebastian Sainz, McLaren Renault, 29, did not finish.

Constructor Standings

1. Mercedes, 44.

2. Ferrari, 22.

3. Red Bull Racing Honda, 15.

4. Haas Ferrari, 8.

5. Alfa Romeo, 6.

6. AFS Motors Racing Ferrari, 4.

7. Racing Point BWT Mercedes, 2.

Pro soccer

MLS

Eastern Conference

W L T Pts GF GA
D.C. United 0 0 0 0 0 0
Columbus 0 0 0 0 0 0
Toronto FC 0 0 0 0 0 0

New York 0 0 0 0 0 0
New York City FC 0 0 0 0 0 0
Philadelphia 0 0 0 0 0 0

Atlanta 0 0 0 0 0 0
Chicago 0 0 0 0 0 0
New England 0 0 0 0 0 0

Philadelphia 0 0 0 0 0 0

Western Conference

W L T Pts GF GA
Seattle 0 0 0 0 0 0
Los Angeles FC 0 0 0 0 0 0

Houston 0 0 0 0 0 0
Minnesota United 0 0 0 0 0 0
LA Galaxy 0 0 0 0 0 0

FC Dallas 0 0 0 0 0 0
Real Salt Lake 0 0 0 0 0 0
Sporting KC 0 0 0 0 0 0

Portland 0 0 0 0 0 0
Portland 0 0 0 0 0 0
Vancouver 0 0 0 0 0 0

San Jose 0 0 0 0 0 0
Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Sunday, March 17

Los Angeles FC, Portland 3, Portland 0.

Philadelphia 1, Atlanta 1, tie.

Cincinnati 3, Portland 0.

Philadelphia 1, Atlanta 1, tie.

Cincinnati 3, Portland 0.

Philadelphia 1, Atlanta 1, tie.

Cincinnati 3, Portland 0.

Philadelphia 1, Atlanta 1, tie.

Cincinnati 3, Portland 0.

Philadelphia 1, Atlanta 1, tie.

Cincinnati 3, Portland 0.

Philadelphia 1, Atlanta 1, tie.

Cincinnati 3, Portland 0.

Philadelphia 1, Atlanta 1, tie.

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Cincinnati 3, Portland 0.

Philadelphia 1, Atlanta 1, tie.

Cincinnati 3, Portland 0.

Philadelphia 1, Atlanta 1, tie.

Cincinnati 3, Portland 0.

Philadelphia 1, Atlanta 1, tie.

College hockey

Conference tournaments

ATLANTIC HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

Quarterfinals

(Best-of-3)
Wednesday, March 13

Sacred Heart 5, RT 4.

Friday, March 15

RT 7, Sacred Heart 6.

American International 4, Army 0.

Penn State 3, RT 1.

RT 3, Sacred Heart 2, RT advances.

2-1.

Saturday, March 16

Army 2, American International 1.

Robert Morris 2, Bentley 1.

Niagara 5, Air Force 2, OT.

2-0.

Sunday, March 17

Robert Morris 4, Bentley 3, OT.

Morris advances 2-1.

American International 4, Army 1.

American International advances 2-1.

At Buffalo, N.Y.

Friday, March 22

American International vs. Robert Morris.

RT vs. Niagara.

BIG TEN CONFERENCE

Semifinals

Saturday, March 16

Notre Dame 2, Minnesota 1, OT.

Sunday, March 17

Penn State 5, Ohio State 1.

Championship

Saturday, March 23

Penn State at Notre Dame.

CACC

Quarterfinals

(Best-of-3)

Friday, March 15

Harvard 3, Cornell 2.

Brown 2, Quinnipiac 1, OT.

Clarkson 3, Yale 2.

Saturday, March 16

Harvard 3, Cornell 2.

Brown 2, Quinnipiac 1, OT.

Clarkson 3, Yale 2.

Sunday, March 17

Harvard 3, Cornell 2.

Brown 2, Quinnipiac 1, OT.

Clarkson 3, Yale 2.

Sunday, March 17

Harvard 3, Cornell 2.

Brown 2, Quinnipiac 1, OT.

Clarkson 3, Yale 2.

Sunday, March 17

Harvard 3, Cornell 2.

Brown 2, Quinnipiac 1, OT.

Clarkson 3, Yale 2.

Sunday, March 17

Harvard 3, Cornell 2.

Brown 2, Quinnipiac 1, OT.

Clarkson 3, Yale 2.

Sunday, March 17

Harvard 3, Cornell 2.

Brown 2, Quinnipiac 1, OT.

Clarkson 3, Yale 2.

Sunday, March 17

Harvard 3, Cornell 2.

Brown 2, Quinnipiac 1, OT.

Clarkson 3, Yale 2.

College baseball

Sunday's scores

EAST

Assumption 5, LIU Post 4.

Baruch 6-1, SUNY Maritime 5-12.

Delaware Valley 6, EDU-Florida 2.

Mount Aloysius 2-8, Thiel 1-3.

Navy 6-1, Bucknell 3-10.

New Rochelle 14-7, John Jay 6-8.

Pace 4, Stonethill 1.

Penn St. Fairleigh Dickinson 6-1.

Ramapo 10, McDaniel 4.

St. Joseph's (Maine) 5, Clark 4.

St. Joseph's (N.Y.) 3-0, Yeshiva 3-1.

Shepherd 10, Glenville 5-1.

Springfield 5, Rutgers-Camden 4.

West Liberty 3, Concord 1.

Albany (Ga.) 10, SUNH 1.

Bethel (Maine) 1-13, Old Westbury 9-0.

Campbell 8, High Point 6.

Cumberlands (Ky.) 12, Shawnee St. 2.

Flagler 9, Augusta 1.

Hofstra 10, Liberty 5.

Jacksonville 5, UNO-Greensboro 4.

Kentucky St. 15, Morehouse 3.

Lock Haven 6, Winston-Salem St. 3.

LSU Shreveport 18, Houston-Victoria 5.

Midland Georgia 8, Blue Mountain 2.

Milligan 18, Montreat 11.

North Carolina 4, Florida Gulf Coast 1.

St. Michael's 7-5, Gallaudet 2-1.

Sierra Heights 3, N.C. Wesleyan 1.

Truett-McConnell 12, Point (Ga.) 4.

MIDWEST

Adrian 8, Marietta 4.

Anderson (Ind.) 4, St. Norbert 3.

Charleston (W.Va.) 6, Notre Dame 2.

Clark 6, Graceland (Iowa) 2.

Columbia (Mo.) 6, Park 3.

GOLF/AUTO RACING

McIlroy holds on for Players title

By DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. — His best swing was followed by his biggest drive, both setting up birdies, and from there Rory McIlroy knew how to finish.

Suddenly staked to a one-shot lead, McIlroy had a 125-yard walk along the water to the 17th hole to face an island that never looks smaller than on Sunday at The Players Championship, followed by the toughest hole on the TPC Sawgrass with water down the entire left side.

"Just make three more good swings ... and this thing is yours," McIlroy kept telling himself.

He delivered in a major way to win the next best thing to major.

McIlroy made two late birdies to regain the lead, was at his best when the pressure was the highest, and he closed with a 2-under 70 for a one-shot victory over Jim Furyk in his 10th appearance at The Players Championship.

"To step up and make those three good swings, it's very satisfying knowing that it's in there when it needs to be," McIlroy said.

McIlroy could not afford a mistake over the final hour because of Furyk, the 48-year-old former Ryder Cup captain who nearly pulled off a stunner. Furyk, one of the last players to qualify for the strongest field in golf, capped off a 67 with a 7-iron into the 18th so good that he started walking when he hit it. The ball plopped down 3 feet from the hole for a birdie to take the lead.

But not for long. Coming off a careless bogey on the 14th, McIlroy thought he was in trouble when his tee shot went well to the right toward a clump of native grass. He was lucky it came down into the bunker, and from there he drilled a 6-iron from 180 yards.

"Some golf shot there," Harry Diamond, his caddie and best friend, said as the ball was in the air.

McIlroy called it "the best shot of the day, by far," and it settled 15 feet behind the hole for a birdie to tie. Then, he blasted a 347-yard drive — the longest of the day on

the par-5 16th — into a good lie in the rough that left him a 9-iron to 20 feet for a two-putt birdie and the lead.

Most important, he found dry land on the 17th with a 9-iron, and relied on a memory from 10 years ago in Hong Kong — pick a target and swing hard — to hammer a tee shot down the 18th fairway to set up the win.

He finished at 16-under 272 and earned \$2.25 million, to date the biggest winner's check in golf.

The timing was ideal. McIlroy had not finished worse than a tie for sixth in his five previous starts this year — three of them playing in the final group — with no trophy to show for it. And one month away is the Masters, the final piece for McIlroy to get the career Grand Slam.

It wasn't easy. Eight players had at least a share of the lead at some point, and a dozen players were separated by two shots at various times.

"I think the toughest part is seeing yourself up there, whatever score you're on, and seeing 10 or 11 guys with a chance," McIlroy said. "I guess that was the hardest thing was just getting yourself to the point mentally where you say, 'Well, why not me? This is my tournament. I'm going to finish it off.'"

Furyk didn't know he was in The Players until one week ago, and was on the verge of winning until McIlroy came through in the end. Furyk started the back nine with two birdies to get in the mix. His only regret was a 3-foot par putt on the 15th.

Even so, it showed he has plenty of game left after devoting two years as Ryder Cup captain. The runner-up finish moves him high enough in the world ranking (No. 57) to qualify for the Match Play in two weeks.

"A shot here, a shot there, maybe could have been a little different," Furyk said. "But ultimately, left it all out there. It was also nice to get in contention, to get under the heat, to have to hit shots under a lot of pressure, and then to respond well to that and hit some good golf shots. It'll be a confidence boost going forward."



LYNNE SLADKY/AP

Rory McIlroy blasts from a sand trap on the 14th green in the final round of The Players Championship on Sunday in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla. He shot a 2-under 70 to beat Jim Furyk by one stroke.



JAMES QUIGO, THE DAILY PRESS/AP

Kyle Busch celebrates after winning Sunday's NASCAR race at Auto Club Speedway in Fontana, Calif.

Kyle Busch ties Petty's mark with 200th win at Fontana

By GREG BEACHAM
Associated Press

FONTANA, Calif. — Kyle Busch was dominating yet another race when a speeding penalty on pit road dropped him to the middle of the pack at Auto Club Speedway.

Busch had to pass 17 cars in 73 laps on sizzling old asphalt to get his landmark 200th victory across NASCAR's major series.

Busch didn't even need 50 laps. He capped a series of brilliant passes by drafting off Joey Logano and Brad Keselowski to seize the lead again, and with this superb driver behind the wheel of a stout Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota, absolutely nothing was stopping Busch's drive into history.

Busch tied Richard Petty's NASCAR record with his 200th win Sunday, making an impressive late surge to claim the Cup Series race on the same weathered Fontana track where he got his first Cup win.

"It certainly is a monumental moment for all of us," Busch said. "I knew we had a great race car and we were fast. I just wasn't sure how we were going to be able to come back through traffic and get through the field. Maybe the stars aligned a little bit more perfectly today."

Busch dominated the first two stages before that speeding penalty added a degree of difficulty to this win. After he carved through the field he was aided by a timely late caution that helped Busch take the lead for good with 26 laps remaining.

The win was the fourth Cup victory overall and the third in seven years at Fontana for Busch. He has earned 53 of his 200 wins in the Cup Series, along with 53 in the Truck Series and 94 in Xfinity.

Busch previously expressed ambivalence about the achieve-

ment, saying 200 is just a number that doesn't compare neatly with Petty's achievements. All 200 of Petty's victories were in NASCAR's top Cup Series.

Busch's excitement was still obvious after crossing the line.

"All I do is win, win, win, no matter what," he said over the radio.

His team handed him a white flag with a logo emblazoned with "200 WINS" to display from his window during his celebratory drive across the track where he earned his first Cup victory way back in September 2005. He then stood atop his car and waved it toward his large Southern California fan base before taking his customary bow.

"Feels just like No. 1," he said. "Feels just like yesterday. That was such an awesome race car. Dang. I'm glad we put on a heck of a show for these fans. To win 200, whatever it means, it means a lot to me."

"I just wish that we could keep it going, running strong, running well, and winning races."

Logano was 2.534 seconds in back of Busch, while Keselowski finished third, unable to catch the winningest driver of their era while Busch became the first repeat winner this season.

Busch equaled Petty's victories mark in the 998th race of his 17-year career. Petty competed in 1,184 NASCAR races over 35 years.

In the barstool debate, detractors point to Busch's many advantages in the Xfinity and Trucks series while observing that Petty's 200 wins all came in NASCAR's top series, compared to just 53 for Busch.

Anybody watching Busch's electrifying move through the field at Fontana couldn't doubt his sublime talent.

"He made a couple of moves where I felt like, 'Holy mackerel,'"

said Gibbs, his boss for the last 12 seasons. "Really with a passion, the way he drives the car, we appreciate it so much. I think he's an unusual athlete. If there's anything in front of him, he's driving a race car, he's going to try to get it. That showed up today."

More things to know about Fontana:

Close calls

Busch reached the brink of the record by sweeping last week-end's two races at Phoenix, but he missed his first chance to tie Petty in the Fontana Xfinity Series race Saturday because of a disastrous late pit stop. He also could have hit the moon sooner if he hadn't been nabbed for speeding on pit road two weeks earlier at his hometown track in Las Vegas. Busch had barely crossed the line Sunday when his mind went to those disappointments.

"Can you imagine if I could have got Gibbs and Xfinity yesterday?" Busch said over the radio. "How many in a row? How many?"

Big bro

Kurt Busch also had an outstanding race, finishing sixth after starting 21st. He promptly jumped out of his car to join his younger brother's celebration of a landmark win.

"He was the lazy one on the couch not doing much when we were kids," Kurt Busch said. "But a number is a number, and it is significant and I am really proud of him. When you are running Trucks, Xfinity [or] Cup, you are wearing your body out every day going after it. And anytime I've run Xfinity and then have to go back it up with a Cup race, it puts a toll on your body. He just keeps going, and going. I am proud of him."

NBA

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Toronto	49	21	.700	—
x-Philadelphia	35	25	.583	4
Boston	43	27	.614	6
Brooklyn	36	36	.500	14
New York	14	56	.200	35
Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	33	38	.478	—
Orlando	38	38	.500	0
Charlotte	31	38	.449	2
Washington	30	40	.429	3½
Atlanta	24	47	.338	10
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Milwaukee	52	18	.743	—
Indiana	44	26	.629	8
Detroit	36	33	.522	15½
Chicago	49	22	.688	3½
Cleveland	17	53	.243	35

Western Conference

Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	44	26	.629	8
San Antonio	41	29	.586	3
New Orleans	30	42	.417	15
Dallas	28	41	.359	15½
Memphis	28	42	.400	16
Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Denver	46	22	.676	—
Portland	42	26	.609	4
Oklahoma City	42	28	.600	5
Utah	40	28	.580	6½
Minnesota	28	45	.389	15
Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Golden State	47	21	.691	—
Sacramento	37	31	.543	10
San Antonio	34	35	.493	13½
L.A. Lakers	31	39	.443	17
Phoenix	23	49	.315	23½

x-clinched playoff spot

Saturday's games

Boston 129, Atlanta 120
Phoenix 138, New Orleans 136, OT
Washington 135, Memphis 128

Dallas 121, Cleveland 116
Golden State 110, Oklahoma City 88

San Antonio 108, Portland 103
Denver 117, Indiana 100

Utah 114, Brooklyn 98

Sunday's games

New York 124, L.A. Lakers 123

Miami 93, Charlotte 77

Philadelphia 130, Milwaukee 125

Detroit 110, Toronto 107

Orlando 101, Atlanta 91

Sacramento 129, Chicago 102

Houston 117, Minnesota 102

Clippers 119, Brooklyn 116

Monday's games

Detroit at Cleveland

LA at Washington

Denver at Boston

New York at Toronto

Dallas at San Antonio

Miami at Oklahoma City

New Orleans at Dallas

Phoenix at Phoenix

Indiana at Portland

Tuesday's games

Philadelphia at Charlotte

Houston at Atlanta

Golden State at Minnesota

L.A. Lakers at Milwaukee

Orlando at Sacramento

Indiana at L.A. Clippers

Wednesday's games

Boston at Philadelphia

Milwaukee at Cleveland

New Orleans at Orlando

Dallas at New York

Houston at Memphis

Washington at Chicago

LA Lakers at Phoenix

Toronto at Oklahoma City

Dallas at Portland

Leaders

Scoring

G FG FT PTS AVG

Harden, HOJ 66 706 644 2368 35.9

Curry, GOK 57 535 234 1593 27.9

James, LAL 51 529 261 1401 27.5

LeBron, CLE 66 689 444 1785 27.0

Durant, GOK 65 626 409 1782 27.4

Embiid, PHO 58 524 467 1584 27.3

LeBron, NYR 61 483 322 1383 27.1

Davis, NOR 54 516 341 1420 26.3

Beal, WAS 70 668 309 1832 26.2

Rebounds

G DEF OFF TOT AVG

Drummond, DET 56 1467 613 1013 15.3

Embiid, PHO 58 1447 791 1316 15.3

Jordan, NYR 60 1415 647 862 15.0

Robert, UTA 69 267 626 893 12.9

Antetokounmpo, MIL 65 1477 824 12.7

Assists

G AST AVG

Westbrook, OKC 62 648 10.5

Lowry, TOR 56 507 9.1

James, LAL 51 406 8.0

Simmons, PHO 69 541 7.8

Young, ATL 71 549 7.7

Sunday

Clippers 119, Nets 116

BROOKLYN — Harris 4-10 1-1 12, Kuzma 2-3 0-0 5, Allen 5-10 3-13, Russell 13-25 0-1 32, LeVert 6-15 0-1 12, Carroll 7-13 5-5 22, Graham 1-4 0-0 2, Davis 2-4 1-2 5, Dinwiddie 1-6 0-1 23. Totals: 42-100 18-25 116.

CLIPPERS — Shamet 4-9 2-2 14, Gallinari 7-17 5-5 20, Zubac 1-9 1-2 3, Gilgeous-Alexander 5-12 1-2 14, Beverley 4-5 0-0 10, Chandler 0-2 0-0 0, Harrell 8-17 4-6 20, Green 3-5 1-7 1, Williams 8-16 7-7 25, Thornehill 0-0 0-0 0, Temple 2-5 2-3 6. Totals: 42-97 22-28 119.

Brooklyn 23 37 32-119
L.A. Clippers 23 37 32-119
Three-Point Goals—Brooklyn 14-38 (Russell) 6-12, Carroll 3-6, Harris 3-6, Kuzma 1-1, Dinwiddie 1-7, Graham 0-2, LeVert 0-1, Green 0-1, Temple 0-1. Fouled Out—Kuzma, Rebounds—Brooklyn 51 (Allen) 11, L.A. Clippers 54 (Gallinari) 11. Assists—Brooklyn (Russell) 10, L.A. Clippers 26 (Gilgeous-Alexander 10). Total Fouls—Brooklyn 28, L.A. Clippers 25. Technicals—L.A. Clippers' coach Doc Rivers. A—17,247 (18,997).

Magic 101, Hawks 91

ATLANTA — Prince 11-11 0-0 9, Collins 5-9 0-0 10, Dedmon 4-10 0-0 10, Young 9-18 2-3 20, Huertler 1-7 0-0 3, Bembry 4-9 0-0 8, Len 1-2 2-3, Atlanta 2-5 0-5 5, Carter 3-8 0-0 8, Bazemore 1-6 0-4 5. Totals: 38-91 7-0-91.

ORLANDO — Isaac 0-6 0-0 0, Gordon 16-12 2-2, Vucelja 10-20 7-7 27, Augustin 4-10 1-11, Fourrier 4-12 2-2 11, Iwuodu 3-7 1-4 13, Bied 1-2 2-4 5, Carter-Williams 0-3 5-8 5, Ross 2-8 1-1 6. Totals: 33-85 26-33 101.

Atlanta 25 21 22-91
Orlando 25 21 22-91
Three-Point Goals—Atlanta 8-35 (Carter 2-6, Dedmon 2-6, Adams 1-3, Huertler 1-3, Len 1-3, Prince 1-5, Collins 0-1, Bembry 0-1, Bazemore 0-2, Young 0-5), Orlando 9-37 (Gordon 3-6, Iwuodu 2-4, Augustin 2-4, Ross 1-6, Fourrier 1-5, Carter-Williams 0-2, Vucelja 0-3, Isaac 0-6). Fouled Out—Collins, Rebounds—Atlanta 50 (Dedmon 14), Orlando 55 (Vucelja 20). Assists—Atlanta 20 (Young 5), Orlando 21 (Augustin 9). Total Fouls—Atlanta 29, Orlando 15. Technicals—Carter-Williams. A—18,066 (18,846).

76ers 130, Bucks 125

PHILADELPHIA — Butler 8-16 9-13 27, Harris 4-7 3-4 12, Embiid 15-31 6-7 40, Simmons 4-8 0-2 8, Redick 7-10 1-2 19, Ayton 2-5 0-0 4, Dario 0-0 0-0 0, Connaughton 1-5 2-2 4, McConnell 1-0 0-0 0. Totals: 47-100 21-33 130.

MILWAUKEE — Mirocic 1-7 0-0 2, Antetokounmpo 15-26 19-21 52, Lopez 4-13 3-4 16, Bledsoe 5-14 1-12 12, Middleton 8-10 0-1 19, Iyavosa 2-3 0-0 5, Wilson 5-8 0-0 13, Hill 1-2 0-0 2, Snel 0-0 0-0 0, Connaughton 2-5 0-0 2. Totals: 43-95 23-28 125.

Philadelphia

41-41-30

Milwaukee

28 25 29-125

Three-Point Goals—Philadelphia 15-32 (Butler 4-8, Embiid 4-8, Simmons 1-2, Ennis III 2-4, Scott 2-6, Harris 1-2, McConnell 0-1), Milwaukee 16-50 (Wilson 3-6, Middleton 3-8, Mirocic 1-2, Ayton 1-2, Snel 1-2, Bledsoe 1-4, Connaughton 0-2, Iyavosa 1-2). Fouled Out—Embiid, Hill, Mirocic 0-1. Rebounds—Philadelphia 54 (Embiid 15), Milwaukee 46 (Antetokounmpo 16). Assists—Philadelphia 26 (Embiid 9), Milwaukee 29 (Antetokounmpo 7). Total Fouls—Philadelphia 23, Milwaukee 22. A—18,148 (17,500).

Knicks 124, Lakers 123

L.A. LAKERS — James 11-26 11-13 33, Kuzma 8-14 2-2 18, McGee 6-10 0-1 12, Rondo 1-4 0-0 3, Bullock 6-10 0-1 14, Williams 1-1 0-0 2, Thompson 2-4 1-2 6, Garza 3-6 5-6 12, Caldwell-Pope 4-11 1-1 11, Hart 1-1 0-0 2. Totals: 47-97 22-28 123.

NEW YORK

41-41-30

28 25 29-125

Three-Point Goals—L.A. Lakers 7-20 (Bullock 2-5, Caldwell-Pope 2-7, Rondo 1-1, Williams 1-1, Thompson 1-2, Garza 1-2, Hart 1-2, James 0-6, New York 12-22 (Mudray 8-14 0-10, Jordan 6-10 2-4 5, Mudray 8-11 9-10 28, Dotson 10-13 2-5 25, Thomas 3-7 0-0 12, Robinson 1-1 0-2, Allen 2-2 2-2, Trier 2-5 0-2 4. Totals: 46-76 24-29 124).

L.A. Lakers

30 36 30-123

Three-Point Goals—L.A. Lakers 7-20 (Bullock 2-5, Caldwell-Pope 2-7, Rondo 1-1, Williams 1-1, Thompson 1-2, Garza 1-2, Hart 1-2, James 0-6, New York 12-22 (Mudray 8-14 0-10, Jordan 6-10 2-4 5, Mudray 8-11 9-10 28, Dotson 10-13 2-5 25, Thomas 3-7 0-0 12, Robinson 1-1 0-2, Allen 2-2 2-2, Trier 2-5 0-2 4. Totals: 46-76 24-29 124).

Three-Point Goals—L.A. Lakers 7-20 (Bullock 2-5, Caldwell-Pope 2-7, Rondo 1-1, Williams 1-1, Thompson 1-2, Garza 1-2, Hart 1-2, James 0-6, New York 12-22 (Mudray 8-14 0-10, Jordan 6-10 2-4 5, Mudray 8-11 9-10 28, Dotson 10-13 2-5 25, Thomas 3-7 0-0 12, Robinson 1-1 0-2, Allen 2-2 2-2, Trier 2-5 0-2 4. Totals: 46-76 24-29 124).

Three-Point Goals—L.A. Lakers 7-20 (Bullock 2-5, Caldwell-Pope 2-7, Rondo 1-1, Williams 1-1, Thompson 1-2, Garza 1-2, Hart 1-2, James 0-6, New York 12-22 (Mudray 8-14 0-10, Jordan 6-10 2-4 5, Mudray 8-11 9-10 28, Dotson 10-13 2-5 25, Thomas 3-7 0-0 12, Robinson 1-1 0-2, Allen 2-2 2-2, Trier 2-5 0-2 4. Totals: 46-76 24-29 124).

Three-Point Goals—L.A. Lakers 7-20 (Bullock 2-5, Caldwell-Pope 2-7, Rondo 1-1, Williams 1-1, Thompson 1-2, Garza 1-2, Hart 1-2, James 0-6, New York 12-22 (Mudray 8-14 0-10, Jordan 6-10 2-4 5, Mudray 8-11 9-10 28, Dotson 10-13 2-5 25, Thomas 3-7 0-0 12, Robinson 1-1 0-2, Allen 2-2 2-2, Trier 2-5 0-2 4. Totals: 46-76 24-29 124).

Pistons 110, Raptors 107

TORONTO — Leonard 11-21 6-8 33, Siakam 6-13 0-0 12, Gasol 3-7 2-2 9, Lin 1-0 0-0 3, Green 4-9 0-0 12, Powell 4-8 1-1 10, Anunoby 3-7 1-1 8, Moreland 13-0 0 3, VanVleet 6-10 1-2 17, McCaw 0-0 0-0 0. Totals: 39-82 11-14 107.

DETROIT

21 26 37 33-107

Three-Point Goals—Toronto 18-36 (Leonard 5-8, Gasol 4-5, Green 4-5, Moreland 1-1, Lin 1-2, Anunoby 1-2, Gasol 1-4, Powell 1-4, Siakam 0-2). Detroit 8-27 (Griffin 4-8, Jackson 2-3, Galloway 1-3, Ellington 1-6, Smith 0-2, Brown 0-2, Maker 0-3). Fouled Out—Sikam, Rebounds—Toronto 38 (Gasol 11), Detroit 44 (Drummond 17). Assists—Toronto 25 (Gasol 8), Detroit 23 (Smith 8). Total Fouls—Toronto 22, Detroit 18. A—15,777 (20,491).

Heat 93, Hornets 75

CHARLOTTE — Bridges 1-3 0-0 2, Williams 1-7 0-0 2, Olynyk 1-3 0-0 2, Walker 4-16 0-0 2, Batum 3-11 5-12, Kidd-Gilchrist 0-1 0-0 0, Kaminsky 3-10 7-9 13, Parker 4-5 2-2 11, Monk 0-1 0-0 0, Lamb 8-20 2-2 1, Bacon 1-6 0-0 2. Totals: 26-83 16-37 75.

MIAMI — Jones Jr. 2-6 1-4 6, Olynyk 1-7 2-3 4, Adebayo 7-10 2-4 16, Richardson 2-17 3-4 7, Walters 4-10 0-0 12, Robinson 0-0 0-0 0, Johnson 2-4 0-0 6, Whiteside 0-0 0-0 6, Dragic 7-11 1-1 19, Wade 6-13 3-17, McDermott 0-0 0-0 0. Totals: 34-86 12-39 93.

Charlotte

20 29 21 18-75

Three-Point Goals—Charlotte 7-36 (Okyne 3-7, Wiggins 1-2, Towles 2-5, Din 1-7, Monk 0-1, Bridges 0-1, Kaminsky 0-4, Williams 0-4, Miami 13-33 (Dragic 4-6, Walters 4-8, Wade 2-2, Johnson 2-3, Jones Jr. 1-2, Olynyk 0-3, Richardson 0-9). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Charlotte 44 (Batum, Kaminsky 7). Miami 55 (Adebayo, Olynyk 9). Assists—Charlotte 11 (Walker 4), Miami 25 (Olynyk 6). Total Fouls—Charlotte 19, Miami 21. A—13,600 (19,600).

Clippers 119, Nets 116

MINNESOTA — Wiggins 6-17 0-0 14, Saric 3-7 2-2 8, Towns 8-22 4-5 22, Jones 0-6 0-0 0, Okogie 8-14 2-2 1, Bates-Diop 3-5 0-0 7, Tolliver 1-4 0-0 3, Gibson 4-7 7-7 15, Deng 2-2 1-1 6, Bayless 3-5 0-0 9, Reynolds 0-0 0-0 0, Terrell 0-0 0-0 0. Totals: 38-92 16-37 117.

HOUSTON

41-41-30

28 25 29-125

Three-Point Goals—Houston 12-32 (Tucker 3-5 0-8, Capela 8-11 4-5 20, Paul 8-12 5-5, Harden 8-24 0-0 20, Clark 0-0 0-0 0, Nene 1-2 0-0 2, House Jr. 5-6 2-4 16, Green 3-12 1-2 9, Shumpert 3-7 0-0 2. Totals: 43-99 19-37.

Minnesota

30 29 24-102

Houston 26 24 24-117

Three-Point Goals—Minnesota 10-32 (Okogie 3-7, Wiggins 1-2, Towles 2-5, Din 1-7, Monk 0-1, Bridges 0-1, Kaminsky 0-4, Williams 0-4, Miami 13-33 (Dragic 4-6, Walters 4-8, Wade 2-2, Johnson 2-3, Jones Jr. 1-2, Olynyk 0-3, Richardson 0-9). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Charlotte 44 (Batum, Kaminsky 7). Miami 55 (Adebayo, Olynyk 9). Assists—Charlotte 11 (Walker 4), Miami 25 (Olynyk 6). Total Fouls—Houston 19, Miami 21. A—13,600 (19,600).

Kings 129, Bulls 102

CHICAGO — Porter Jr. 3-9 1-1 8, Markkanen 4-8 2-2 11, LeVert 4-8 2-4 6, Durand 4-11 0-0 8, Lavine 7-18 2-3 18, Felicio 2-3 0-0 4, Harrison 5-6 1-1 11, Arcidiacono 4-6 0-0 10, Seligson 2-3 0-0 6, Fox 2-3 0-0 6, 4-8 0-1 11, Blankenship 2-6 0-1 4. Totals: 39-88 14-21 102.

KINGS

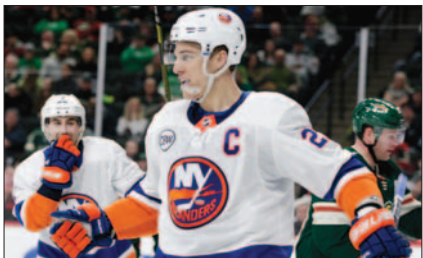
41-41-30

28 25 29-125

Three-Point Goals—Kings 12-32 (Tucker 3-5 0-8, Capela 8-11 4-5 20, Paul 8-12 5-5, Harden 8-24 0-0 20, Clark 0-0 0-0 0, Nene 1-2 0-0 2, House Jr. 5-6 2-4 16, Green 3-12 1-2 9, Shumpert 3-7 0-0 2. Totals: 43-99 19-37.

Three-Point Goals—Kings 12-32 (Tucker 3-5 0-8, Capela 8-11 4-5 20, Paul 8-12 5-5, Harden 8-24 0-0 20, Clark 0-0 0-0 0, Nene 1-2 0-0

NHL/SPORTS BRIEFS



PAUL BATTAGLIA/AP

Islanders left wing Anders Lee celebrates after scoring against the Wild in the second period Sunday in St. Paul, Minn.

Roundup

Nelson, Lee lift Islanders to win

Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. — A pair of guys who played high school hockey in Minnesota helped the New York Islanders pick up an important two points on the road Sunday night.

They also did no favors for the home team.

Brock Nelson scored 1:04 into overtime and the Islanders beat the Wild 3-2 to move into the tie atop the Metropolitan Division.

"It's a great moment for him and hopefully he gets a few minutes to share it with them after this and then we've gotta head home," said Devon Toews, who assisted on a goal by Anders Lee.

Nelson played for Warroad near the Canadian border; Lee is from the Minneapolis suburb of Edina.

Lee scored for the fourth straight game and Jordan Eberle added a goal for New York. The Islanders are tied with Washington with 91 points with 10 games remaining, but currently hold the tiebreaker with a greater scoring differential.

In the extra session, Nelson converted a feed from Matthew Barzal to beat Alex Stalock with a wrist shot to the slot. Nelson, who added an assist, established a new career high of 47 points.

Flyers 2, Penguins 1 (OT) Sean Couturier beat Matt Murray with 3 seconds remaining in overtime and visiting Philadelphia put together an improbable rally.

James Van Riemsdyk led the score with 18 seconds left in regulation when Murray's glove couldn't quite reach Van Riemsdyk's wrist shot from the slot. The team traded a flurry of quality chances in the extra period before Couturier dangled around Pittsburgh star Sidney Crosby on the rush then sent a shot over Murray's stick to give Philadelphia's fading playoff hopes a needed jolt.

NHL scoreboard

Eastern Conference

	Atlantic Division				
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts
x-Tampa Bay	72	55	13	4	114
Boston	72	43	20	9	95
Toronto	72	43	24	5	91
Montreal	72	38	28	6	84
Florida	72	32	28	12	76
Buffalo	72	31	32	9	71
Detroit	72	25	37	10	60
Ottawa	72	25	41	6	56
	Metropolitan Division				
Washington	72	25	30	7	91
N.Y. Islanders	72	22	42	7	81
Pittsburgh	72	39	24	7	98
Carolina	71	39	25	7	85
Columbus	72	40	28	4	84
Philadelphia	72	25	29	8	78
N.Y. Rangers	72	28	31	13	69
New Jersey	72	27	37	9	63

Western Conference

	Central Division				
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts
Winnipeg	71	42	25	4	88
Nashville	73	41	27	5	87
St. Louis	72	37	27	8	82
Dallas	72	37	29	6	80
Minnesota	72	34	30	9	77
Colorado	72	31	29	12	74
Chicago	71	32	30	9	73
	Pacific Division				
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts
x-Calgary	72	44	21	7	95
San Jose	72	43	21	8	94
Vegas	72	40	27	5	85
Arizona	72	36	30	6	78
Edmonton	72	32	33	7	74
Vancouver	72	32	33	17	71
Anaheim	74	30	35	9	69
Los Angeles	71	25	38	8	58

NOTE: Two points for a win, one for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild card teams advance to playoffs.

NOTES Two points for a win with one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division are awarded two cards per conference advance to playoffs.

x-clinched playoff spot

Saturday's games

Detroit 2, N.Y. Islanders 1	
Florida 2, Columbus 0	
Tampa Bay 6, Washington 3	
Carolina 4, Buffalo 2	
Chicago 2, Montreal 0	
Ottawa 6, Toronto 2	
Winnipeg 2, Calgary 1	
Minnesota 5, N.Y. Rangers 2	
Edmonton 3, Arizona 2	
San Jose 4, St. Louis 3	
Sunday's games	
Colorado 3, San Jose 2	
Buffalo 4, St. Louis 3, SO	
N.Y. Islanders 3, Minnesota 2, OT	
Philadelphia 2, Pittsburgh 1, OT	
Vegas 6, Edmonton 3	

Monday's games

Arizona at Tampa Bay	
Chicago vs. San Jose	
Washington at San Jose	
Pittsburgh at Carolina	
Montreal at Philadelphia	
Detroit at N.Y. Rangers	
San Jose at Nashville	
Florida at Dallas	
Columbus at Calgary	
Wednesday's games	
Toronto at Buffalo	
Calgary at Anaheim	
Ottawa at Vancouver	
Winnipeg at Anaheim	

Sunday

Golden Knights 6, Oilers 3

Edmonton	1	1	1	3	7
Goals	1	1	1	1	3
First Period —1, Vegas, Stone 3 (Karlsson), 5:40; 2, Vegas, Nugent-Hopkins 3 (McDavid, Kiehlorn), 13:14 (pp.). 3, Vegas, Cain 18 (Nosek, Carpenter), 19:05.					
Second Period —4, Edmonton, Brattin 4 (McDavid), 6:22; 5, Vegas, Marchessault 21 (Karlsson, Smith), 7:12.					
Third Period —4, Vegas, Marchessault 22 (Smith), 0:40; 7, Edmonton, Russell 3 (Garay, Khairat), 5:25; 8, Vegas, McNeill 4 (Reaves, Theodore), 9:45; 9, Vegas, Toffi 16 (Reaves), 16:08.					
Shots on Goal —Edmonton 7-6-6=19. Vegas 14-11-9=34.					
Power-play opportunities —Edmonton 1 of 1; Vegas 0 of 3.					
Penalty minutes —Edmonton, Koskinen 22-17-4 (34 shots-28 saves). Vegas, Subban 5-7-0 (22 shots-19 saves).					
—AB-1317 (17,367). T—2:29.					

Ducks 3, Panthers 2

Florida	0	1	1	2	3
Anaheim	1	1	1	1	3
First Period —1, Anaheim, Shore 9 (Gardner, Rask), 12:00.					
Second Period —2, Florida, Dadoon 25 (Huberdeau, Rask), 3:33; 3, Anaheim, Henrique 17 (Getzlaf), 12:04.					
Third Period —4, Florida, Ekblad 13 (Gardner, Rask), 5:25; 5, Vegas, Anaheim 13 (Silfverberg 22 (Rakell), 15:17.					
Shots on Goal —Florida 9-18-12=39. Anaheim 9-8-5=22.					
Power-play opportunities —Florida 0 of 1; Anaheim 10 of 2.					
Goalsies —Florida, Montembeault 4-1-1 (22 shots-19 saves). Anaheim, Gibson 22-11-8 (39-37).					
—AB-1523 (17,174). T—2:25.					

Flyers 2, Penguins 1 (OT)

Philadelphia	0	0	1	2	2
Pittsburgh	0	0	1	0	1
Third Period —1, Pittsburgh, Biegaer 4 (Kessel, Pettersson), 2:07. 2, Philadelphia, van Riemsdyk 25 (Konecny, Couturier), 19:41.					
Overtime —3, Philadelphia, Couturier 29 (Gostisheh), 4:56.					
Shots on Goal —Philadelphia 6-7-19=31. Pittsburgh 8-19-7=42.					
Power-play opportunities —Philadelphia 0 of 3; Pittsburgh 0 of 4.					
Goalsies —Philadelphia, Hart 14-9-1 (42 shots-31 saves). Pittsburgh, Murray 24-12-4 (38-36).					
—AB-18,636 (18,387). T—2:40.					

Canucks 3, Stars 2 (SO)

Vancouver	2	0	0	3	3
Dallas	1	0	1	0	2
First Period —1, Vancouver, Schaller 1 (Beagle), 0:52. 2, Vancouver, Schaller 2 (Pettersson, Bergeron), 10:53.					
Second Period —3, Dallas, Benn 26 (Nichushin, Polak), 19:38.					
Third Period —Dallas, Fedun 4 (Klingberg, Radulov), 16:10.					
Shootout —Vancouver 1 (Pettersson) N, Dallas 0 (Sequin, N, Radulov, Benn, N, Hintz) N.					

Shots on Goal—Vancouver 11-11-3=37. Dallas 15-12-14=46.

Power-play opportunities—Vancouver 0 of 2; Dallas 0 of 2.

Goalsies—Vancouver, Markstrom 26-20 (46 shots-44 saves). Dallas, Khudobin 13-15-4 (27-25).

—AB-18,125 (18,532). T—2:45.

Islanders 3, Wild 2 (OT)

N.Y. Islanders	1	0	1	3	3
Minnesota	0	1	1	0	2
First Period —1, N.Y. Islanders, Eberle 14 (Barzal), 9:28.					
Second Period —2, Minnesota, Parise 25 (Suter, Donato), 11:11 (pp.). 3, N.Y. Islanders, Lee 27 (Nelson, Toews), 16:12 (OT).					
Third Period —4, Minnesota, Spurgeon 14 (Donato, Staal), 7:15 (pp.).					
Shots on Goal —N.Y. Islanders 9-7-1=21. Minnesota 4-16-14=34.					
Power-play opportunities —N.Y. Islanders 1 of 1; Minnesota 0 of 1.					
Goalsies —N.Y. Islanders, Greis 22-12 (34 shots-26 saves). Minnesota, Stalock 6-6-3 (20-17).					
—AB-18,696 (18,064). T—2:35.					

Sabres 4, Blues 3 (SO)

St. Louis	1	1	1	3	3
Buffalo	1	0	1	0	2
First Period —1, Buffalo, Larsson 6 (Girgensons, Bogosian), 6:42. 2, St. Louis, Maroon 7, 9:12. 3, Buffalo, Rodrigues 9 (Montour, Nylander), 14:48.					
Second Period —4, Buffalo, Sheary 13 (Dahlin, Nylander), 7:46. 5, St. Louis, Perron 18 (Parayko), 12:15.					
Third Period —5, St. Louis, Schenn 14 (Dale, Zetter, O'Reilly), 12:08.					
Shootout —St. Louis 1 (Bosak, G. Perron) N, O'Reilly N, Buffalo 2 (Eichel, G. Sheary) N, Reinhart G.					
Shots on Goal —St. Louis 9-11-7=33. Buffalo 10-11-12=33.					
Power-play opportunities —St. Louis 0 of 2; Buffalo 0 of 2.					
Goalsies —St. Louis, Allen 18-17-7 (34 shots-31 saves). Buffalo, Hult 17-20-5 (33 shots-28 saves).					
—AB-18,486 (19,070). T—2:33.					

Avalanche 3, Devils 0

New Jersey	0	0	0	0	0
Colorado	2	1	0	2	3
First Period —1, Colorado, Barrie 8 (MacKenzie, Andriighetto), 2:22. 2, Colorado, Barrie 9 (Andriighetto), 11:05.					
Second Period —3, Colorado, MacKinnon 37 (MacKenzie, Andriighetto), 11:05.					
Third Period —Colorado, MacKinnon 37 (MacKenzie, Andriighetto), 11:05.					
Shots on Goal —New Jersey 5-12-25=42. Colorado 13-12-34=59.					
Power-play opportunities —New Jersey 0 of 4; Colorado 0 of 3.					
Goalsies —Colorado, Schneider 5-11-3 (33 shots-31 saves). Colorado, Grabauer 12-9-3 (22-27).					
—AB-18,037 (18,007). T—2:28.					

Calendar

April 6 — Last day of regular season.	
April 10 — NHL playoffs begin.	
May 27/June 1 — NHL scouting combine, Buffalo, N.Y.	
June 15 — Last possible day for Stanley Cup Final.	
June 15-19 — NHL general managers meetings, Vancouver, British Columbia.	
June 21-22 — NHL Draft, Vancouver, British Columbia.	
July 1 — Free agency begins north of the border.	
Oct. 26 — Tim Hortons NHL Heritage Classic, Calgary vs. Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatchewan.	

Briefly

Dolphins turn to QB Fitzpatrick

Associated Press

MIAMI — Ryan Fitzpatrick will become the Miami Dolphins' caretaker quarterback.

The well-traveled veteran agreed to terms Sunday on an \$11 million, two-year contract as a replacement to Ryan Tannehill and a placeholder until the Dolphins can draft their franchise quarterback. That could happen next month, but is more likely in 2020.

The 36-year-old Fitzpatrick has a 50-75-1 record as a starter for seven NFL teams. He started seven games for Tampa Bay last year and had a passer rating of 100.4, which ranked ninth in the league.

■ Other NFL news:

The Green Bay Packers have re-signed veteran tight end Marcedes Lewis.

A 13-year veteran, Lewis played in all 16 games for the team last season, but had only three receptions for 39 yards. He was signed in 2018 to help block in Green Bay's running game, but the Packers ranked 22nd in the league on the ground.

Union head praises Jays' minor league pay raise

DUNEDIN, Fla. — Union head Tony Clark lauded the Toronto Blue Jays on Monday for giving minor league players a 50 percent raise, and he hopes other clubs do the same.

Representatives from the players' association visited the Blue Jays spring training camp a day after The Athletic reported the team planned to boost pay for all minor leaguers, some making as little as \$1,100 a month in recent seasons.

Minor league players are not paid during spring training or offseason. The players don't receive lucrative signing bonuses, often struggle to afford meals, rent and basic equipment like cleats and bats.

Toronto is the first club to announce such a raise.

Spence defends IBF welterweight title

ARLINGTON, Texas — Errol Spence Jr. had to go the distance to defend his IBF welterweight title for the third time. Still, the outcome was never in doubt for one of the world's best pound-for-pound boxers.

Spence unanimously outpointed previously undefeated challenger Mikey Garcia, a skilled boxer who moved up two weight classes for what he considered a legacy fight Saturday night.

Spence improved to 25-0 after all three judges awarded him every round. One card was 120-07, and the other two were 120-108.

NCAA



Key: Fellow No. 1 seed Gonzaga was only team to beat Duke at full strength

But even in the billion-dollar business that is March Madness, there are some things money just can't buy, and Williamson wants to savor every bit of this

Of Duke's five losses this season, only two have come with Williamson in the lineup, but one of those came when another

"When you get two guys hurt and injured, there is no game plan anymore," coach Mike Krzyzewski said after that one.

It leaves Gonzaga as the only

Gonzaga earned the No. 1 seed in the West; the Zags would meet Duke in the national semi-

But there's plenty of drama to play out between now and then. Not all of it will involve Duke

NCAA TOURNAMENT

MIDWEST REGIONAL

Team capsules

1 North Carolina
Record: 27-6. **Last 10:** 8-2. **Coach:** Roy Williams.
Best Wins: 88-72 at Duke on Feb. 20. **Worst Loss:** 89-92 vs. Texas on Nov. 22.
Team Scoring: 89.0 points per game, 46.4 fg pct., 37.5 3-pt pct., 42.7 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Cameron Johnson 16.3; Cody White 16.2; Luke Maye 14.7. **Rebounds:** Maye 10.5; Johnson 5.8; Avram Mavris 4.7. **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.45):** White (4.2/2.9), 135 assists.
The Skinny: The Tar Heels claimed their first regular-season sweep of Duke since 2009, a year that ended with Williams claiming his second NCAA championship. They were trying to beat the Blue Devils three times in a season for the first time since 1976, but Zion Williamson tipped in his own miss to put the fifth-ranked Blue Devils ahead for good.

16 Iowa
Record: 17-15. **Last 10:** 10-0. **Coach:** Tim Cluess.
Best Win: 80-75 vs. Hartford on Nov. 21. **Worst Loss:** 68-89 at Fairfield on Jan. 27.
Team Scoring: 76.8 points per game, 45.3 fg pct., 35.1 3-pt pct., 74.1 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** E.J. Crawford 17.9; Rickey McGill 15.5; Tajuan Agee 13.3. **Rebounds:** Agee 9.1; Crawford 5.1; Avg team margin (minus-2.1). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.06):** McGill (5.0/2.8), 159 assists.
The Skinny: The Gaels lost nine of their first 11 games and on Feb. 8, were 7-15 overall, 5-6 in conference play. Iowa has since won 10 consecutive games including its MAAC-record fourth time in a row, Iowa has just two turnovers from last year's squad while Rickey McGill, the MAAC tournament MVP, and junior E.J. Crawford, the team's leading scorer.

1 Utah State
Record: 10-10. **Coach:** Craig Smith.
Best Win: 81-76 at home to Nevada on March 2.
Worst Loss: 77-78 at home to Fresno State on Jan. 9.
Team Scoring: 79.1 points per game, 47.4 fg pct., 35.5 3-pt pct., 74.7 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Sam Merrill 21.2; Neemas Ouellet 11.5; Diego Bribo 8.3. **Rebounds:** Ouellet 8.9; Quinn Taylor 6.2; Avg team margin (plus-8.9). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.37):** Merrill (4.2/1.8), 444 assists.
The Skinny: The Aggies won their first Mountain West Conference title under first-year coach Craig Smith to return to the NCAA Tournament for the first time since 2011.

9 Washington
Record: 26-8. **Last 10:** 7-3. **Coach:** Mike Hopkins.
Best Win: 61-55 at Oregon on Jan. 24. **Worst Loss:** 73-77 at Cal on Jan. 28.
Team Scoring: 69.8 points per game, 45.3 fg pct., 34.5 3-pt pct., 69.4 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Jaylen Nowell 6.2; David Nwora 6.2; Noah Dickinson 5.2. **Rebounds:** Dickinson 7.4; Nowell 5.3; Avg team margin (minus-2.2). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (0.87):** Nowell (3.1/2.9), 106 assists.
The Skinny: The Huskies, making their first appearance in the NCAA Tournament since 2011, are hobbling into the postseason despite winning the regular-season conference title. They closed the month of February with a loss to California — the Golden Bears' only conference win this season — scored a season-low 49 points in a loss to Oregon in the regular-season finale and shot 33 percent from the field in a 68-48 loss in the 12 championship game. Washington ranks No. 9 nationally in steals per game (9.0) — led by Mattie Thybulke's Division I-leading 3.4 — and are 30th in scoring defense, allowing just 64.4 points per game.

1 Auburn
Record: 26-9. **Last 10:** 9-1. **Coach:** Bruce Pearl.
Best Win: 84-80 at home to Tennessee on March 9. **Worst Loss:** 77-80 at South Carolina on Jan. 22.
Team Scoring: 79.4 points per game, 44.9 fg pct., 37.6 3-pt pct., 71.0 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Bryce Brown 15.7; Jared Harper 15.4; Chuma Okeke 11.6. **Rebounds:** Lamar Austin 10.7; Okeke 8.6. **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.18):** Harper (5.8/2.3), 156 assists.
The Skinny: The SEC tournament champs are riding an eight-game winning streak that includes two wins over Tennessee. The Tigers hadn't played in the title game since 2000. Auburn is 3-5 this season against teams that were ranked in the Top 25 at the time they played them.

12 New Mexico State
Record: 30-4. **Last 10:** 10-0. **Coach:** Eric Mason.
Best Win: 63-57 at Utah Valley on Jan. 19. **Worst Loss:** 62-82 at California Baptist on Jan. 3.
Team Scoring: 76.1 points per game, 45.9 fg pct., 33.5 3-pt pct., 67.5 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Terrell Brown 11.5; Eli Haskins 11.5. **Rebounds:** Chuba G. Ivin Aureochechea 5.1; Avg team margin (plus-9.6). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.24):** Harris (3.4/1.5), 198 assists.
The Skinny: The Aggies, who won 28 games in each of the past seasons, have won a program-record 50 games in their third consecutive NCAA Tournament appearance and are 1-0 in the tournament. The Aggies have an experienced rotation with 13 players (11 of which are upper-classmen) averaging 10 or more minutes per game and are averaging 12.6 points in the final 10 minutes of games (2018-19, 2017-18, 2016-17, 2015-16, 2014-15). **MSU ranks No. 3 nationally in rebound margin (plus-9.6), and No. 11 in scoring margin (plus-14.0).**

13 Northeastern
Record: 25-9. **Last 10:** 7-3. **Coach:** Bill Self.
Best Win: 87-67 at Tennessee on Nov. 23. **Worst Loss:** 65-82 at Virginia on Jan. 19.
Team Scoring: 75.4 points per game, 46.2 fg pct., 35.0 3-pt pct., 69.1 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Dedric Lawson 19.3; Lateralvicki Luke 14.1; Udoaka Azubuike 14.0. **Rebounds:** Lawson 7.6; Azubuike 7.6. **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.27):** Pusic (4.2/3.2), 110 assists.
The Skinny: The Huskies won their last six NCAA openers. Leading scorer Dedric Lawson was the CAA tournament MVP when Northeastern knocked off league champion Hofstra. He hit 12 of 12 in that game. The Badgers have a 10-0 record, including all of an 18-point lead, something they learned when losing a 17-point lead in the title game the year before.



HOUSTON'S BRISON GRESHAM AND FABIAN WHITE FIGHT FOR A GLASS WITH CINCINNATI'S JARRON CUMBERLAND IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE AMERICAN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP GAME SUNDAY IN MEMPHIS, TENN.

Play in Houston in mix

By BLAIR KERKHOFF
 The Kansas City Star

Bluebloods are the favorites by seed in the Midwest Regional. North Carolina is a No. 1 seed for a record 17th time. All three of Roy Williams' NCAA championships have come as a top seed. Kentucky, college basketball's all-time winningest program, is the No. 2. Kansas, second on that list, is the No. 4 seed.

Third-seeded Houston also has a rich tradition, with five Final Fours in its history. The Tar Heels, like Duke, have played all of the No. 1 seeds, and North Carolina has a better record in those games at 3-2. After a 21-point loss to Louisville early in the ACC season, the Heels regrouped and won 15 of their next 17, losing only to Virginia and Duke.

Kentucky got good news during the SEC Tournament with the return of Reid Travis from a knee sprain. Here's a fun fact for the Wildcats: Kentucky is the all-time leader in NCAA Tournament games played with 177. Kansas City, site of the Midwest semifinal and finals, has been the site of the most tournament games: 131.

If the Wildcats win two games, they will play an NCAA Tournament game in Kansas City for the first time.

Fourth-seeded Kansas has been in Kansas City many times. So has Williams, the Jayhawks' coach from 1988-2003. Kelvin Sampson has led Houston to one of its greatest seasons. The Cougars are 31-2. Only the 1984 team that lost to Georgetown for the national championship won more games in program history.

Players to watch

Kentucky's PJ Washington has come in strong the season, averaging 14.7 points and hitting 42 percent of his three pointers.

Kansas big man Dedric Lawson averages a double-double at 19.2 points and 10.4 rebounds.

Keep an eye on Auburn guard Jared Harper, if you can. He's one of the fastest players in the game.

Marial Shayok, a Virginia transfer, is the top gun for sixth-seeded Iowa State.

Utah State's Sam Merrill was the Mountain West's player of the year and the tournament MVP.

Upset special

Tenth-seeded South Hall takes out seventh-seeded Wofford.

Winner

Kentucky over North Carolina.

Team capsules

6 Iowa State
Record: 23-11. **Last 10:** 6-4. **Coach:** Eve Prohm.
Best Win: 80-66 vs. Kansas on March 16. **Worst Loss:** 66-71 at Arizona on Jan. 12.
Team Scoring: 77.4 points per game, 47.7 fg pct., 38.5 3-pt pct., 73.2 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Marial Shayok 14.2; Lindell Wrighton 14.5; Taiten Horne-Tucker 12.1. **Rebounds:** Marial Jacobson 10.7; Horne-Tucker 6.6. **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.37):** Nick Weiler-Babb (4.0/1.6), 136 assists.
The Skinny: The Cyclones, a No. 5 seed entering the Big 12 Conference tournament, became the lowest seeded team to ever win out and clinch automatic berth were 18-5 before losing six of eight games to end the regular season. Iowa State could be primed to make a deeper-than expected run as it has a 6-3 record against Top 25 opponents this season.

11 Ohio State
Record: 19-14. **Last 10:** 7-3. **Coach:** Chris Holtmann.
Best Win: 64-56 at Cincinnati on Nov. 7. **Worst Loss:** 50-68 at Northwestern on March 6.
Team Scoring: 69.6 points per game, 43.7 fg pct., 34.3 3-pt pct., 73.4 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Kaleb Wesson 14.4; C.J. Jackson 12.2; Andrew Wesson 8.8. **Rebounds:** K. Wesson 6.8; Kyle Young 4.6; Avg team margin (plus-1.3). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.14):** Jackson (3.5/2.3), 113 assists.
The Skinny: Ohio State's eventual Big Ten tournament champion Michigan State in the quarterfinals for its fifth loss in its last seven games. Scoring coach Kaleb Wesson leads the team in both scoring and rebounding. The Buckeyes have four wins in nine games against teams that made the 2018 NCAA Tournament, including wins on the road against Cincinnati and Creighton.

3 Houston
Record: 31-3. **Last 10:** 8-2. **Coach:** Kelvin Sampson.
Team Scoring: 76.2 points per game, 44.9 fg pct., 36.4 3-pt pct., 70.4 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Corey Davis 16.9; Armon Brooks 13.5; DeJuan Blair 10.9. **Rebounds:** Brooks 6.6; Nate Hinton 4.5; Avg team margin (plus-7.7). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.31):** Gabe Robinson Jr. (3.7/1.7), 160 assists.
Worst Loss: 82-76 at home to LSU on Dec. 12.
The Skinny: Not since the days of Phi Slama Jama in the early 1980s has a team scored more than 80 points and reached the NCAA Tournament in back-to-back seasons. Dou splitting losing to No. 24 Cincinnati in the ACC title game, the Cougars went 3-1 against Top 25 competition.

14 Georgia State
Record: 24-9. **Last 10:** 8-2. **Coach:** Hunter.
Best Win: 83-80 at Alabama on Dec. 4. **Worst Loss:** 68-77 at Virginia Tech on Jan. 12.
Team Scoring: 77.2 points per game, 46.6 fg pct., 38.9 3-pt pct., 65.9 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** D'Marcus Simmonds 16.2; Armon Brooks 13.5; DeJuan Blair 10.9. **Rebounds:** Malik Bennett 7.7; Simmonds 4.9; Avg team margin (minus-0.2). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.07):** D'Marcus Simmonds (3.7/3.8), 119 assists.
The Skinny: The Panthers, who have won three conference championships are riding a five-game winning streak into the tournament. The Panthers are the only team in the country with 10 players to make 20 or more three-pointers this season. Georgia State went 2-3 against opponents this season, all on the road, who completed in last year's NCAA Tournament.

7 Wofford
Record: 29-4. **Last 10:** 10-0. **Coach:** Mike Young.
Best Win: 72-43 at NC-Greensboro on Jan. 10. **Worst Loss:** 64-75 at Oklahoma on Nov. 18.
Team Scoring: 83.0 points per game, 47.3 fg pct., 41.6 3-pt pct., 69.9 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Fletcher Magee 22.4; Marcus Jackson 14.2; Nathan Houser 13.3. **Rebounds:** Jackson 7.5; Keve Alamo 7.5. **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.40):** Stormy Murphy (3.2/1.3), 103 assists.
The Skinny: The Terriers have won 20 games in a row and their four losses this season against NCAA Tournament teams from Power 5 conferences (No. 3 North Carolina, No. 17 Kansas, No. 11 Kentucky, No. 12 Duke). Wofford became just the third team in Southern Conference history to sweep conference play with at least a 16-game regular season — even more impressive when you figure that four SoCon teams won at least 24 games this season. The Terriers are led by two-time SEC player and former SEC MVP Fletcher Magee.

10 Seton Hall
Record: 20-13. **Last 10:** 10-0. **Coach:** Kevin Willard.
Best Win: 84-83 vs. Kentucky on Dec. 8. **Worst Loss:** 67-87 at home to DePaul on Jan. 19.
Team Scoring: 73.9 points per game, 44.1 fg pct., 32.4 3-pt pct., 70.8 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Myles Powell 22.8; Myles Cole 10.3; Quincy McKnight 9.5. **Rebounds:** McKnight 4.0/2.5, 131 assists.
The Skinny: The Pirates are the only team in the tournament championship game. Villanova has won four of the last five championships with the only loss during the span to Seton Hall in the final game of the tournament, a 100-99 straight NCAA Tournament, matching a school best (1991-94).

Record: 27-6. **Last 10:** 7-3. **Coach:** John Calipari.
Best Win: 71-63 at home to Kansas on Jan. 26. **Worst Loss:** 67-71 at Alabama on Jan. 5.
Team Scoring: 76.7 points per game, 47.8 fg pct., 35.4 3-pt pct., 73.4 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** PJ Washington 14.8; Tyler Herro 14.2; Keldon Johnson 13.4. **Rebounds:** Johnson 7.6; Tyler Herro 6.9; Avg team margin (plus-8.0). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.10):** Ashton Hagans (4.5/2.4), 148 assists.
The Skinny: The Wildcats are the only No. 1 seed to appear to Tennessee in the SEC semifinal. Not too bad considering the seeds. The Wildcats have lost to Duke, Travis, who missed several weeks with a sprained right knee, in the tournament. The Wildcats scored 11 points in a start in the last game. Kentucky beat Tennessee by 17 when they were down by 19 late in the regular season before losing by four in the league semifinal.

15 Abilene Christian
Record: 27-6. **Last 10:** 10-0. **Coach:** Bill Campbell.
Best Win: 83-68 at home to Campbell on Dec. 4. **Worst Loss:** 67-71 at Alabama on Jan. 5.
Team Scoring: 74.5 points per game, 47.4 fg pct., 38.6 3-pt pct., 71.5 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Jaren Lewis 13.7; Jalen Ricks 13.1; Payton Ricks 11.7. **Rebounds:** Lewis 6.2; J. Maxwell 4.7; Avg team margin (plus-10.3). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.00):** Jalen Franklin (4.9/2.1), 163 assists.
The Skinny: The Huskies were making their first-ever NCAA Tournament appearance after six years of competing at the Division I level. AC is riding a six-game winning streak and has a 15-3 record since the start of the year. The West of the West is done by committee as Jaren Lewis, Jalen Ricks, Payton Ricks and Jalen Franklin each average double figures.

NCAA TOURNAMENT

WEST REGIONAL

Team capsules

1 Gonzaga
Record: 30-3. **Last 10:** 9-0. **Coach:** Mark Few.
Best Win: 89-87 vs. Duke on Nov. 21. **Worst Loss:** 67-65 vs. St. Mary's on March 12.
Team Scoring: 88.0 points per game, 53.2 fg pct, 36.5 three-pt pct, 76.7 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Rui Hachimura 20.1; Brandon Clarke 16.5; Zach Norvell Jr. 15.3. **Rebounds:** Clarke 8.4; Hachimura 6.6; Avg team margin (plus-6.2). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.76):** Perkins 4.0 (5.2/1.1), 215 assists.
The Skinny: Despite their face plant in the WCC tournament championship game, the Bulldogs proved their mettle by beating Duke in the championship game of the Maui Invitational in November. The top-scoring offense in the country had just 47 in a 13-point loss to Saint Mary's, a team it had beaten by 48 and 14 during the regular season.

6 Fairfield Dickinson
Record: 20-13. **Last 10:** 9-1. **Coach:** Greg Herenda.
Best Win: 77-67 at Princeton on Nov. 21. **Worst Loss:** 96-103 at home to Central Connecticut State.
Team Scoring: 75.4 points per game, 47.8 fg pct, 40.3 three-pt pct, 73.2 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Darnell Edge 16.4; Jabali Jenkins 13.5; Mike Holloway Jr. 12.5. **Rebounds:** Kaleb Bishop 6.3; Holloway Jr. 5.5; Avg team margin (minus-0.8). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.05):** Jenkins 4.6 (5.2/1.1), 190 assists.
The Skinny: Fairfield Dickinson captured its second Northeast Conference Championship in the last four years with an 89-76 victory over St. Francis (Pa.) in the title game.

5 Prairie View A&M
Record: 22-12. **Last 10:** 10-0. **Coach:** Byron Smith.
Best Win: 83-44 at Santa Clara on Nov. 9. **Worst Loss:** 64-75 at East Carolina on Nov. 21.
Team Scoring: 75.0 points per game, 43.8 fg pct, 31.1 three-pt pct, 68.1 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Gary Blackston 15.2; Devonte Patterson 13.4; Gerard Anderson 10.0. **Rebounds:** Blackston 7.1; Anderson 5.7; Avg team margin (minus-2.0). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (0.99):** Dennis Jones 4.5 (5.3/0.8), 140 assists.
The Skinny: The Panthers have an 11-game winning streak and are dancing for the first time in 21 years. It has been a historic season at Prairie View, which won the SWAC regular season and tournament championship for the first time.

8 Syracuse
Record: 20-13. **Last 10:** 4-6. **Coach:** Jim Boeheim.
Best Win: 95-61 at Duke on Jan. 14. **Worst Loss:** 59-73 at home to Georgia Tech on Jan. 12.
Team Scoring: 69.7 points per game, 42.2 fg pct, 32.7 three-pt pct, 68.4 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Tyus Battle 17.2; Elijah Hughes 13.4; Oshae Brissett 12.4. **Rebounds:** Brissett 7.5; Pascal Ojukwu 5.4; Avg team margin (minus-2.0). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (0.99):** Brissett 4.0 (5.2/1.2), 150 assists.
The Skinny: The Orange tied for sixth place in the Atlantic Coast Conference regular season before losing to Duke 84-72 in the quarterfinals of the tournament. Syracuse had no answer for the return of Duke's Zion Williamson, who scored 29 points in a 13-for-13 shooting performance.

9 Baylor
Record: 19-13. **Last 10:** 4-6. **Coach:** Scott Drew.
Best Win: 73-62 at home to Texas Tech on Jan. 19. **Worst Loss:** 58-59 at home to Stephen F. Austin on Dec. 18.
Team Scoring: 71.8 points per game, 44.0 fg pct, 33.9 three-pt pct, 67.3 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Tristan Clark 14.6; Mikal Mason 14.6; Mario Kegler 10.7. **Rebounds:** Mark Vital 7.2; Drew Gentry 6.3; Avg team margin (plus-4.4). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.05):** Mason 3.3 (2.6/0.8), 65 assists.
The Skinny: The Bears are limping as they enter the tournament with four straight defeats. They've dropped four of their last five, all six-game win streak. Baylor has dropped five of eight contests against Top 25 opponents this season.

14 Marquette
Record: 24-9. **Last 10:** 5-5. **Coach:** Keith Wojciechowski.
Best Win: 109-85 at home to Buffalo on Dec. 21. **Worst Loss:** 72-96 at Indiana on Jan. 12.
Team Scoring: 77.7 points per game, 45.9 fg pct, 39.8 three-pt pct, 75.9 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Markus Howard 25.0; Sam Hauser 19.4; Joey Hauser 9.7. **Rebounds:** Hauser 11.1; Hauser 5.3; Avg team margin (plus-4.5). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (0.99):** Howard 4.0 (4.0/0.1), 311 assists.
The Skinny: The Red Storm finished second in the Big East conference regular season before being upset by Seton Hall 81-79 in the quarterfinals. The season of the year Markus Howard missed from point-blank range at the buzzer, Marquette made 1-5 to close out the regular season and tournament.

12 Murray State
Record: 24-7. **Last 10:** 8-2. **Coach:** Matt McMahon.
Best Win: 77-65 vs. Belmont on March 9. **Worst Loss:** 65-80 at Jacksonville on Jan. 31.
Team Scoring: 83.3 points per game, 49.6 fg pct, 34.8 three-pt pct, 69.8 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Ryan Morant 24.6; Darnell Buchanan 13.0; Teyvon Brown 11.7. **Rebounds:** Buchanan 6.6; Morant 5.5; Avg team margin (plus-3.8). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.50):** Morant 4.0 (5.0/1.0), 311 assists.
The Skinny: The Racers finished high when the high-scoring guard and OVC player of the year led the Racers to the conference tournament title and then second consecutive NCAA berth. The sophomore guard shot over 59 percent this season while averaging 24.6 points, 10 assists and 5.5 rebounds.

Record: 27-7. **Last 10:** 8-2. **Coach:** Leonard Hamilton.
Best Win: 82-68 at Virginia Tech on March 15. **Worst Loss:** 62-75 at Pittsburgh on Jan. 14.
Team Scoring: 74.9 points per game, 44.3 fg pct, 34.6 three-pt pct, 69.8 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Mfondu Kabengele 12.9; Terance Mann 11.2; Trent Forrester 10.4. **Rebounds:** Mann 6.4; Kabengele 5.7; Avg team margin (plus-4.7). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (0.93):** Forrester 4.2 (2.0/1.2), 138 assists.
The Skinny: Three of their seven defeats occurred Jan. 12, 20, one of which was an 80-78 defeat against then-top-ranked Duke. Since that time, the team made Florida State 14-2 without consecutive defeats.

13 Vermont
Record: 27-7. **Last 10:** 9-1. **Coach:** John Becker.
Best Win: 77-67 at Virginia Tech on March 15. **Worst Loss:** 62-75 at Pittsburgh on Jan. 14.
Team Scoring: 74.9 points per game, 44.3 fg pct, 34.6 three-pt pct, 69.8 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Anthony Lamb 22.1; Evan Smith 15.2; Trent Forrester 10.4. **Rebounds:** Lamb 7.8; Smith 4.0; Avg team margin (plus-4.3). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.09):** Robin Duncan 2.6 (1.4/1.2), 82 assists.
The Skinny: Anthony Lamb, the America East Conference Player of the Year, averaged 24.4 points and 4.4 rebounds in a tournament final, with 28 points and nine rebounds as Vermont defeated defending tournament champion UMass 66-61.



Murray State's Ja Morant gestures to the crowd during the Ohio Valley Conference Tournament semifinals on Friday. Morant could be a top three pick in the NBA Draft.

No. 1 Gonzaga needs to rebound in opener

By BLAIR KERKHOFF
 The Kansas City Star

How will Gonzaga respond to its loss to St. Mary's in the West Coast Conference tournament final? It was a stunning outcome, but the selection committee kept the Zags as a top seed.

After all, the Bulldogs defeated Duke on their way to a 30-3 season. Gonzaga has one of the nation's most efficient offenses, and the program knows its way to the Final Four, having played in the 2017 NCAA title game.

No telling where second-seeded Michigan would be if it could solve Michigan State. The Wolverines have lost three of their last seven, all to the Spartans. The good news for John Beilein's club is he wouldn't have to face Michigan State again until the national semifinals.

Third-seeded Texas Tech reached a region final last year and overachieved this season as co-champion of the Big 12 after being picked in the second round to finish seventh. The Red Raiders are one of the nation's top defensive teams and should have coach Chris Beard's attention after getting upset by West Virginia in their first conference tournament game.

If zone defense is your thing, check out the 8-9 game between

Syracuse and Baylor. It's the favored scheme of coaches Jim Boeheim and Scott Drew.

Players to watch

Rui Hachimura and Brandon Clarke are Gonzaga's dynamic duo who combine to average 37 points and 15 rebounds. Hachimura hits 47 percent of his three-pointers and Clarke averages 31.3 blocks per game.

Texas Tech's Jarrett Culver was the Big 12 player of the year and averages 18.5 points.

Big East player of the year Markus Howard, who averages 25.1 points, leads fifth-seeded Marquette. Howard will face Murray State, a team led by Ja Morant, the dynamic guard who averages a double-double with 24.6 points and 10.1 assists. He could be a top three pick in the NBA Draft.

Upset special

Morant wins the battle with Howard and the Racers pull off a 12-5 upset over Marquette. There's been at least one of them in nine of the last 11 NCAA Tournaments.

Winner

Michigan over Florida State.

Team capsules

6 Buffalo
Record: 31-3. **Last 10:** 10-0. **Coach:** Nate Oats.
Team Scoring: 84.3 points per game, 46.3 fg pct, 33.6 three-pt pct, 69.1 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** CJ Massey 18.0; Mickey Pendergast 14.0. **Rebounds:** Perkins 7.3; Massinburg 6.6; Avg team margin (plus-4.0). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.43):** Davonta Reed 4.0 (5.2/1.2), 121 assists.
The Skinny: The Bulls finished second in the Pac-12 Northern Division on Dec. 18. **Worst Loss:** 75-77 at Syracuse on Dec. 18.

11 Arizona State
Record: 22-10. **Last 10:** 7-3. **Coach:** Bobby Hurley.
Best Win: 80-76 at home to Kansas on Dec. 22. **Worst Loss:** 70-91 at home to Washington State on Feb. 7.
Team Scoring: 77.8 points per game, 44.7 fg pct, 34.1 three-pt pct, 67.1 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Jaquavis Doris 16.1; Remy Martin 13.4; Zylan Cheatham 11.8. **Rebounds:** Cheatham 10.4; Romello White 5.3; Avg team margin (plus-4.0). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.00):** Martin 5.1 (5.1/0.1), 154 assists.
The Skinny: The Sun Devils finished second in the Pac-12 Conference during the regular season before bowing in overtime to Oregon 79-75 in the semifinal round of the conference tournament.

11 St. John's
Record: 22-12. **Last 10:** 4-6. **Coach:** Chris Mullin.
Best Win: 71-65 at home to Villanova on Feb. 12. **Worst Loss:** 71-79 at home to DePaul on Jan. 12.
Team Scoring: 78.3 points per game, 45.8 fg pct, 36.7 three-pt pct, 72.8 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Shamorie Ponds 19.5; Mustapha Heron 14.9; LJ Peak 14.5. **Rebounds:** Ponds 7.8; Heron 7.8; Avg team margin (minus-5.8). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.16):** Ponds 5.2 (2.2/3.0), 140 assists.
The Skinny: St. John's received its first NCAA Tournament berth in Chris Mullin's four years as coach. The Red Storm, after topping a ranked team, Stanford 83-78 on Jan. 19, shot a season-low 32.8 percent against the Golden Eagles in the Big East Tournament quarterfinal.

3 Texas Tech
Record: 26-6. **Last 10:** 9-1. **Coach:** Chris Beard.
Best Win: 91-62 at Kansas on Jan. 2. **Worst Loss:** 74-79 at home to Virginia on March 14.
Team Scoring: 73.3 points per game, 47.2 fg pct, 36.8 three-pt pct, 72.8 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Jarrett Culver 18.0; Jalen Brunson 11.6; Trevon Smith 10.0. **Rebounds:** Culver 6.3; Trevon Smith 5.7; Avg team margin (plus-4.2). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.13):** Culver 3.7 (2.7/1.1), 147 assists.
The Skinny: The Red Raiders was upset by 10th-seeded West Virginia in the quarterfinals of the Big 12 Tournament, snapping a nine-game winning streak. The Red Raiders, co-regular season champion, may be making their 17th appearance in the NCAA Tournament.

10 North Kentucky
Record: 26-8. **Last 10:** 8-2. **Coach:** John Brannen.
Best Win: 77-68 vs. Wright State on March 12. **Worst Loss:** 77-83 at home to Cleveland State on Feb. 23.
Team Scoring: 79.1 points per game, 48.1 fg pct, 36.6 three-pt pct, 66.5 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Drew McDonald 17.0; Jalen Brunson 11.6; Jalen Brunson 11.6. **Rebounds:** McDonald 9.5; Dante Walton 5.5; Avg team margin (plus-4.0). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.37):** Tate 4.1 (2.3/1.8), 122 assists.
The Skinny: The Horze are headed to the NCAA Tournament for the second time in three seasons after beating top-seeded Wright State 77-66 in the Horizon League tournament. Northern Kentucky had a solid showing in the 2017 season, seed two years ago, falling to second-seeded Kentucky 79-70.

Record: 29-4. **Last 10:** 7-3. **Coach:** Eric Musselman.
Best Win: 72-49 at home to Utah State on Jan. 2. **Worst Loss:** 58-69 at New Mexico on Jan. 5.
Team Scoring: 80.7 points per game, 46.6 fg pct, 35.1 three-pt pct, 70.8 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Caleb Martin 18.2; Jordan Clarkson 17.3; Cody Martin 17.7. **Rebounds:** Newman 6.6; Jordan Clarkson 5.6; The Shawn Thurman 5.7; Avg team margin (plus-4.0). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.46):** Cody Martin 5.1 (5.1/0.1), 167 assists.
The Skinny: Nevada improved its defense this year and added Portland transfer Jaz Johnson. Of concern is the Achilles injury that caused guard Jalen Brunson (66 pp) to miss the Mountain West tournament loss to San Diego State. The 58 wins over the past two seasons is the best in Nevada history.

Record: 19-15. **Last 10:** 4-6. **Coach:** Mike White.
Best Win: 82-68 at home to North Carolina on Jan. 5. **Worst Loss:** 55-61 at home to Georgia on March 12.
Team Scoring: 70.7 points per game, 42.7 fg pct, 33.5 three-pt pct, 71.8 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** KeVaughn Allen 12.0; Noah Locke 9.6; Jalen Hudson 9.6. **Rebounds:** Jalen Hudson 5.2; Jalen Hudson 5.2. **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.06):** Jalen Hudson 4.2 (2.9/1.3), 147 assists.
The Skinny: The Gators are just 2-9 against Top 25 opponents this season. Both those wins came against LSU. The Gators last best run in the NCAA Tournament occurred two years ago when they advanced to the Eight and lost to South Carolina, 77-76.

2 Michigan
Record: 28-7. **Last 10:** 6-4. **Coach:** John Beilein.
Best Win: 94-67 at home to North Carolina on Feb. 12. **Worst Loss:** 62-75 at Pittsburgh on Jan. 14.
Team Scoring: 70.7 points per game, 45.1 fg pct, 35.1 three-pt pct, 69.5 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Jalen Brunson 18.0; Jalen Brunson 11.6; Jalen Brunson 11.6. **Rebounds:** Jalen Brunson 7.8; Jalen Brunson 7.8. **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.13):** Brunson 5.1 (5.1/0.1), 154 assists.
The Skinny: Minus their three defeats against Michigan State on Jan. 24, the Wolverines had their tournament hanging won 11 out of their last 13 games.

Record: 26-8. **Last 10:** 8-2. **Coach:** Travis DeCuire.
Team Scoring: 76.8 points per game, 49.7 fg pct, 38.0 three-pt pct, 69.8 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Jamar Akin 15.5; Sayeed Priddy 15.1; Ahmad Morris 15.0. **Rebounds:** Akin 7.8; Akin 7.8. **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.23):** Akin 4.0 (5.0/1.0), 137 assists.
The Skinny: The Sun Devils finished second in the Pac-12 Conference during the regular season before bowing in overtime to Oregon 79-75 in the semifinal round of the conference championship to make it the NCAA Tournament.

NCAA TOURNAMENT

SOUTH REGIONAL

Team capsules

1 Virginia
Record: 29-3. **Last 10:** 9-1. **Coach:** Tony Bennett.
Best Win: 69-63 at North Carolina on March 15.
Worst Loss: 59-65 vs. Florida State on March 15.
Team Scoring: 71.8 points per game, 47.8 fg pct, 8.3 three-pt pct, 74.6 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Kyle Ay 15.6; DeAndre Hunter 15.1; Ty Jerome 13.0.
Rebounds: Braxton Key 5.5; Hunter 5.0; Avam team margin (plus-9.5). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.61):** Jerome (54/1.16), 156 assists.
The Skinny: Coach Tony Bennett's squad is known for its defense — Virginia leads the nation in scoring defense at 55.1 points per game (the only team allowing fewer than 50) and is No. 4 in field-goal percentage defense (.380) — but is, perhaps, better known for becoming the only No. 1 seed in NCAA Tournament history to lose to a No. 16 seed after falling to 74-54 to UMBC in 2018.

16 Gardner-Webb
Record: 23-11. **Last 10:** 8-2. **Coach:** Tim Craft.
Best Win: 74-62 at Radford on March 10.
Worst Loss: 78-75 vs. Eastern Illinois on Nov. 23.
Team Scoring: 78.3 points per game, 48.8 fg pct, 39.1 three-pt pct, 71.1 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** David Efianayi 18.4; Jose Perez 15.0; OJ Laster 13.7.
Rebounds: Perez 5.8; Laster 5.5; Avg team margin (plus-9.7). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.26):** Perez (3.0/2.0), 102 assists.

The Skinny: The school is making its first NCAA Tournament appearance after beating Radford in the title game behind a career-high 32 points from senior Laster. Efianayi, the Bulldogs' top scorer in their Division I history, shot nearly 50 percent this season in averaging 18.5 ppg and 43 percent from the arc. Freshman swingman Jose Perez (15.1 points, 5.7 rebounds, 3.0 assists) has been a sterling addition.

8 Mississippi
Record: 20-12. **Last 10:** 5-5. **Coach:** Kermit Davis Jr.
Best Win: 81-77 at Mississippi State on Jan. 12.
Worst Loss: 73-74 at Arkansas on March 2.
Team Scoring: 76.0 points per game, 46.2 fg pct, 30.1 three-pt pct, 78.5 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Brein Trevi 35.2; Terence Davis 13.1; Devante Shuler 10.2. **Rebounds:** Davis 5.8; Bruce Stevens 4.4; Avg team margin (plus-2.3). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.13):** Davis (34/2.8), 108 assists.

The Skinny: The Rebels rely heavily on their backcourt of Terence Davis, Brein Trevi and Devante Shuler. That trio combines to average 43.5 points, 13.0 rebounds and 10.2 assists and 44 steals per game. Unfortunately, defense is called an extended run and Mississippi rank last in the SEC in field-goal percentage defense (.441) and three-point field-goal percentage defense (.372).

9 Oklahoma
Record: 19-13. **Last 10:** 4-6. **Coach:** Lon Kruger.
Best Win: 73-63 at West Virginia on March 5.
Worst Loss: 71-75 vs. West Virginia on March 13.
Team Scoring: 71.2 points per game, 44.5 fg pct, 34.2 three-pt pct, 68.1 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Christian James 14.4; Brady Manek 12.0; Kristian Phillips 11.2. **Rebounds:** Donte Johnson 7.6; James 5.9; Avg team margin (plus-5.0). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.04):** James (16.5/1.1), 112 assists.

The Skinny: Oklahoma fell to West Virginia 72-71 in the first round of the 12 tournament when the Sooners' Christian James, who appeared to knock down a buzzer-beating 3-point shot for overtime, was determined to have had his foot on the line. The officials overturned their original call. The Sooners have four quadrant-1 wins and a strong resume against quality opponents, including 7-11 in the league. A win over Kansas down the stretch also helped.

5 Wisconsin
Record: 23-10. **Last 10:** 6-4. **Coach:** Greg Gard.
Best Win: 64-54 at home to Michigan on Jan. 19.
Worst Loss: 73-75 at Indiana on Feb. 26.
Team Scoring: 69.5 points per game, 45.7 fg pct, 37.4 three-pt pct, 65.9 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Ethan Happ 19.4; D'Mitrius Fultz 17.8; David Davison 10.3. **Rebounds:** Happ 6.0; Khylil Iverson 4.0; Avg team margin (plus-1.1). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.13):** Happ (47/2.1), 150 assists.

The Skinny: The Badgers made the No. 16 Big Ten tournament semifinals before losing 67-55 to No. 6 Michigan State. Nine of Wisconsin's 10 losses in the season were by single digits. The Badgers missed the NCAA Tournament last season for the first time since 1998.

12 Oregon
Record: 23-12. **Last 10:** 8-2. **Coach:** Dana Altman.
Best Win: 62-52 at home to WCU on Nov. 28.
Worst Loss: 73-80 at Florida Atlantic on Jan. 10.
Team Scoring: 70.5 points per game, 45.0 fg pct, 34.3 three-pt pct, 71.9 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Bob 17.0; Louis King 17.1; Payton Pritchard 12.7.
Rebounds: Bob 8.6; Pritchard 5.0; Avg team margin (plus-1.7). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.13):** Pritchard (45/1.9), 156 assists.

The Skinny: The Ducks missed the NCAA Tournament last season for the first time, while the team's top scorer, Aaron Heels of the 15-game skill capped by a 30-83 loss at UCLA that dropped Oregon to 13-12. It appeared as if the team would miss the tournament for the second time in four years, but in many ways to win the Pac-12 Tournament, Defense has keyed the resurgence and the team's offense to just 54.2 points per game on the 346-point net (143 of 413) shooting.

Record: 25-8. **Last 10:** 7-3. **Coach:** Bruce Weber.
Best Win: 74-57 at home to Kansas on Feb. 5.
Worst Loss: 68-75 vs. Iowa on Jan. 26.
Team Scoring: 65.8 points per game, 43.1 fg pct, 31.6 three-pt pct, 65.9 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Barry Brown Jr. 14.9; Dean Wade 12.9; Keanu Stokes 12.0. **Rebounds:** Brown 6.0; Wade 5.0; Avg team margin (plus-1.2). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.22):** Stokes (33/1.8), 106 assists.

The Skinny: The co-No. 12 regular season champion is one of the mind it can duplicate last year's run to the Elite Eight. Conversation of Wisconsin's 10 losses in the season were by single digits. In-state rival hasn't done this year than what the Wildcats have. And that includes posting a record since February.

13 UC Irvine
Record: 30-5. **Last 10:** 10-0. **Coach:** Russell Turner.
Best Win: 74-61 at Saint Mary's on Nov. 28.
Worst Loss: 70-80 at home to Long Beach State on Jan. 10.
Team Scoring: 72.9 points per game, 45.9 fg pct, 36.1 three-pt pct, 69.6 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Max Hazzard 19.5; Evan Leonard 11.1; Collin Wilk 8.9. **Rebounds:** Christian Galloway 8.0; Elston Jones 6.8; Avg team margin (plus-1.8). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.13):** Evanson Woot (28/1.8), 84 assists.

The Skinny: Turner coached his team to a program-record 30 wins (so far) this season and their second-over berth in the Big Dance. They come into the tourney on a 16-game win streak. UC Irvine ranks nationally in field-goal percentage defense (.380), ninth in rebound margin (plus-7.3) and 19th in scoring defense (63.3 points per game).



Tennessee's Grant Williams, right, protects the ball from Kentucky forward EJ Montgomery in the SEC Tournament on Saturday. Williams is averaging 19.2 points heading into the NCAA Tournament.

Virginia on high alert to avoid upset again

By BLAIR KERKHOFF
 The Kansas City Star

Gardner-Webb provided one of the best celebration scenes during the NCAA Tournament reveal. Even though the moment was inevitable, the Runnin' Bulldogs cheered when they saw their name on the screen.

It's a great moment for the university in Bowling Springs, N.C., which will make its first NCAA appearance since joining Division I in 2000 after winning the Big South tournament as a No. 4 seed. It probably doesn't matter to the program that they'll be facing perhaps the most motivated top seed in NCAA Tournament history for a first-round game.

Virginia is the opponent, and the Cavaliers made history last year by becoming the first top seed to lose its first NCAA game when UMBC pulled off the shocker.

Virginia will hear all about that the school this week as it opens play in the South Region.

Second-seeded Tennessee also was an early loser in upset fashion in last year's tournament, falling as a No. 3 seed in the final seconds to 11th-seeded Loyola Chicago. The Volunteers spent four weeks as the nation's top-ranked team this season, and their 29 victories are the second most in program history.

But the Vols got a potentially

tough break this year and could be on a collision course with seventh-seeded Cincinnati in Columbus, Ohio.

The bracket also features a pair of major conference co-champions in Purdue (Big Ten) and Kansas State (Big 12). Neither got to their conference tournament final.

Players to watch

Tennessee's Grant Williams won his second straight SEC Player of the Year award and averages 19.2 points and 7.6 rebounds. He and Admiral Schofield (16.4) are one of the nation's top tandems.

Purdue guard Carsen Edwards averages 23 points but has a rough go behind the arc in recent games.

Ethan Happ does it all for Wisconsin, averaging 17.4 points, 10.3 rebounds and 4.7 assists.

Kansas State is one of the nation's top defensive teams and its best defender is guard Barry Brown, Jr., the Big 12's defensive player of the year.

Upset special

No. 11 seed St. Mary's keeps it going and eliminates defending champion Villanova.

Winner

Tennessee over Virginia.

Team capsules

6 Villanova
Record: 25-9. **Last 10:** 6-4. **Coach:** Jay Wright.
Best Win: 78-67 vs. State on Nov. 25.
Worst Loss: 75-78 at Penn on Dec. 11.
Team Scoring: 74.5 points per game, 43.9 fg pct, 35.3 three-pt pct, 74.6 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Phil Booth 18.6; Eric Paschall 16.5; Collin Gillespie 11.1. **Rebounds:** Paschall 6.2; Phil Booth 6.0; Roundtree 5.9; Avg team margin (plus-2.5). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.29):** Booth (12/1.29), 129 assists.

The Skinny: The Wildcats won national championship in 2016 and 2018 and average 34 wins over the last four seasons. After struggling (or trying) to find a difficult road standouts, including losing four of five games in the middle of February, Nova has won five of its last six and claimed a third consecutive Big East Tournament title.

11 Saint Mary's
Record: 22-11. **Last 10:** 8-2. **Coach:** Randy Bennett.
Best Win: 60-47 vs. Gonzaga on March 12.
Worst Loss: 77-84 vs. Pepperdine on Jan. 26.
Team Scoring: 72.9 points per game, 47.4 fg pct, 37.8 three-pt pct, 74.5 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Jordan Ford 21.3; Malik Fitts 15.3; Tanner Krebs 8.9. **Rebounds:** Fitts 7.6; Jordan Hunter 6.8; Avg team margin (plus-5.5). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (0.95):** Fitts (29/0.95), 95 assists.

The Skinny: The Gaels return after a one-year absence thanks to a decisive win over then-No. 1 Gonzaga, in the West Coast Conference national championship game. Saint Mary's has won seven of its last eight games. During that stretch, the Gaels have allowed their opponents to score just 51.3 points per game on 38.1-percent shooting. For the season, Saint Mary's is giving up 64.4 points per game.

Purdue
Record: 23-9. **Last 10:** 7-3. **Coach:** Matt Painter.
Best Win: 73-63 at Michigan State on Dec. 17.
Worst Loss: 80-88 vs. Notre Dame on Dec. 15.

The Skinny: Team scoring: 76.2 points per game, 44.6 fg pct, 36.6 three-pt pct, 73.2 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Carsen Edwards 21.3; Collin Wilk 10.2; Haarms 10.0. **Rebounds:** Noel Eastern 8.5; Haarms 8.0; Jordan Ford 6.9. **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.29):** Cline (33/2.1), 107 assists.

The Skinny: The team's co-champion Boilermakers won 14 of their last 17 games. Carsen Edwards is the third Purdue player to lead in scoring, averaging 23.5 points but only shot 11-for-48 in the two recent losses to Minnesota. These Boilermakers are the also the conference in three-point shooting.

14 Old Dominion
Record: 26-8. **Last 10:** 6-4. **Coach:** Jeff Jones.
Best Win: 62-52 at home to VCU on Nov. 28.
Worst Loss: 60-68 at Virginia Tech on Jan. 10.
Team Scoring: 66.2 points per game, 41.1 fg pct, 35.3 three-pt pct, 66.0 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** B.J. Smith 18.6; Aaron Carver 16.0; Scotty Bennett 10.2. **Rebounds:** Smith 7.4; Aaron Carver 6.0; Avg team margin (plus-2.9). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.04):** Carver (56/2.2), 191 assists.

The Skinny: Old Dominion made its first NCAA Tournament since 2011. ODU needed two big comeback wins to reach the conference ODU game against Western Kentucky. Top scorers Smith and Carver led the team's offense in the latest NCAA statistics (61.2 points per game), with three tournament games by Smith and Carver.

7 Cincinnati
Record: 28-6. **Last 10:** 9-1. **Coach:** Mick Cronin.
Best Win: 69-65 at home to UCF on Feb. 21.
Worst Loss: 71-73 at East Carolina on Jan. 5.
Team Scoring: 71.7 points per game, 43.2 fg pct, 35.0 three-pt pct, 70.4 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Jordan Cumberbatch 19.2; Adam Hovind 10.2; Scotty Red 9.2. **Rebounds:** Scott 7.6; Hovind 6.3; Avg team margin (plus-5.5). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.28):** Cumberbatch (25/2.8), 101 assists.

The Skinny: The Bearcats' 89 wins since the start of the 2016-17 season are the third in the nation behind only Gonzaga (99) and Villanova (92). The team is tied for the fewest times when trailing by eight or more points.

20 Louisville
Record: 22-11. **Last 10:** 4-6. **Coach:** Fran McCaffery.
Best Win: 74-59 at home to Michigan on Feb. 1.
Worst Loss: 65-79 at home to Rutgers on Feb. 2.
Team Scoring: 78.3 points per game, 45.5 fg pct, 36.1 three-pt pct, 74.0 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Tyler Cook 14.9; Jaron Brown 12.8; Jaron Brown 12.8. **Rebounds:** Cook 7.9; Joe Wieskamp 4.8; Avg team margin (plus-1.1). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.29):** Bohannon (12/1.29), 129 assists.

The Skinny: The Hawkeyes limp into the NCAA Tournament after a 17-game losing streak. The team is 10-10 in the Big Ten quarterfinals. The Hawkeyes came out of the woods, where J. Wieskamp, Isaiah Moss and Jordan Bohannon have combined to shoot better than 40 percent from the field and behind the arc in the last two games.

2 Tennessee
Record: 29-5. **Last 10:** 6-4. **Coach:** Rick Barnes.
Best Win: 76-73 vs. Gonzaga on Dec. 9. **Worst Loss:** 80-84 at Auburn on March 9.
Team Scoring: 82.1 points per game, 49.8 fg pct, 35.8 three-pt pct, 76.2 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Grant Williams 19.2; Carsen Edwards 17.4; Scotty Red 9.2. **Rebounds:** Williams 7.5; Alexander 6.4; Scotty Red 6.4. **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.68):** Bone (62/2.0), 203 assists.

The Skinny: The Volunteers are making back-to-back trips to the NCAA Tournament for the first time, each appearing six straight from 2006-2011. In January, they moved into the top of the list of the poll, and the team's 11 wins this season have come against ranked teams and the Vols have won three against Top-5 teams (No. 1 Gonzaga and two against No. 10s).

15 Colgate
Record: 24-10. **Last 10:** 10-0. **Coach:** Matt Lange.
Best Win: 75-64 at home to Bucknell on Feb. 19.
Worst Loss: 70-79 at Maryland on Jan. 26.
Team Scoring: 75.8 points per game, 48.0 fg pct, 38.8 three-pt pct, 74.1 ft pct. **Top Scorers:** Bonkus Vanauskas 15.4; Jordan Burns 12.8; Wil Rayman 11.1. **Rebounds:** Vanauskas 7.9; Rayman 7.9; Jordan Burns 6.9. **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.20):** Burns (59/3.0), 167 assists.

The Skinny: The team's 11th school-record 11-game winning streak into their first tournament since 1996, thanks to 35 points from Jordan Burns in a 94-80 win over Bucknell in the first round. The team's 11th consecutive win in consecutive years, Colgate was a 16-seed. The only postseason appearance since then was the Big East last year.

NCAA TOURNAMENT

EAST REGIONAL

Team capsules

1 Duke
Record: 29-5. **Last 10:** 7-3. **Coach:** Mike Krzyzewski.
Best Win: 81-71 at Virginia on Feb. 9. **Worst Loss:** 91-95 at home to Syracuse on Jan. 14.
Team Scoring: 83.5 points per game, 45.7 f/g pct, 30.2 3-pt pct, 69.0 f/g pct. **Top Scorers:** RJ Barrett 22.9; Zion Williamson 21.1; Cam Reddish 13.7.
Rebounds: Williamson 8.9; Barrett 1.5; Avg team margin (plus-6.1). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.21):** Tre Jones (5.2/5.5), 171 assists.

The Skinny: Location is everything. The Blue Devils are now 83-31 when playing in current NBA venues, including 5-0 this season. Duke has won 14 of its last 16 in NBA arenas.

16 North Carolina Central
Record: 18-15. **Last 10:** 8-2. **Coach:** LeVelle Moton.
Best Win: 50-47 vs. Norfolk State on March 16.
Worst Loss: 67-77 at McKeesport State on Dec. 13.
Team Scoring: 71.4 points per game, 45.6 f/g pct, 31.5 3-pt pct, 71.5 f/g pct. **Top Scorers:** Raean Davis 14.6; Randy Miller Jr. 13.2; Jori Blount 10.5. **Rebounds:** Davis 8.9; Zachary Douglas 7.8; Avg team margin (plus-6.5). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.00):** Jordan Perkins (4.7/2.2), 115 assists.

The Skinny: NCCU, which was the No. 2 seed in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference Tournament, knocked off the top two seeds to earn its third consecutive NCAA Tournament bid.

16 North Dakota State
Record: 18-15. **Last 10:** 7-3. **Coach:** David Richmond.
Best Win: 74-63 vs. Nebraska-Omaha on March 12. **Worst Loss:** 78-90 vs. Incarnate Word on Nov. 17.

Team Scoring: 73.2 points per game, 45.6 f/g pct, 36.5 3-pt pct, 77.4 f/g pct. **Top Scorers:** Vinnie Shuhid 12.8; Tyson Ward 12.3. **Rebounds:** Ward 6.3; Deng Guo 5.0; Avg team margin (minus-1.4). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.09):** Shuhid (2.7/1.3), 98 assists.
The Skinny: The Bison had lost three in a row before a 69-66 win over Purdue Fort Wayne in the regular-season finale that started their current four-game winning streak.

Record: 25-7. **Last 10:** 9-1. **Coach:** Mike Rhoades.
Best Win: 57-51 vs. Temple on Nov. 19. **Worst Loss:** 70-75 vs. Rhode Island on March 7.
Team Scoring: 71.4 points per game, 44.2 f/g pct, 30.7 3-pt pct, 69.8 f/g pct. **Top Scorers:** Marcus Evans 13.8; De'Riante Jenkins 14.1; Issac Vann 10.3. **Rebounds:** Marcus Santos-Silva 7.4; Jenkins 3.9; Avg team margin (plus-1.3). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (0.99):** Evans (3.2/2.6), 103 assists.

The Skinny: The Spartans won the NCAA Tournament for the eighth time in nine years. They led the A-10 in scoring defense (56.6 points per game) and field goal percentage defense (.384, No. 6 nationally), three-point field-goal percentage (.276, No. 3) and steals per game (.80).

16 UC
Record: 23-8. **Last 10:** 7-3. **Coach:** Johnny Dawkins.
Best Win: 68-41 at Houston on March 2. **Worst Loss:** 79-90 at home to Florida Atlantic on Nov. 16.

Team Scoring: 72.1 points per game, 46.3 f/g pct, 34.3 3-pt pct, 64.5 f/g pct. **Top Scorers:** Jordan Nwora 16.0; Aubrey Dawkins 15.2; Tacko Fall 10.8. **Rebounds:** Fall 7.3; Chad Brown 5.2; Avg team margin (plus-2.2). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.13):** Terrell Allen (4.3/1.6), 132 assists.
The Skinny: The Knights, who won a school-record 23 games, were upset by fifth-seeded Memphis in the AAC Tournament quarterfinal. Tacko Fall had 12 points and 10 rebounds against Memphis for his sixth double-double.

Record: 23-10. **Last 10:** 7-3. **Coach:** Sean Howland.
Best Win: 70-59 at home to Cincinnati on Dec. 15. **Worst Loss:** 52-67 at South Carolina on March 13.
Team Scoring: 77.3 points per game, 47.2 f/g pct, 37.8 3-pt pct, 71.1 f/g pct. **Top Scorers:** Quincy Quinerly 16.0; Weathermon 16.2; Luke Peters 11.7; Jordan Carter 10.5. **Rebounds:** Reggie Perry 7.1; Arke Killebrew 6.8; Avg team margin (plus-3.8). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.07):** Peters (5.2/3.0), 171 assists.

The Skinny: The Bulldogs finished tied for fifth in the South-eastern Conference and lost to No. Tennessee in the conference tournament quarterfinals.

12 Liberty
Record: 28-6. **Last 10:** 9-1. **Coach:** Ritchie McKay.
Best Win: 77-52 at home to Georgia State on Nov. 6. **Worst Loss:** 70-79 at Vanderbilt on Nov. 19.

Team Scoring: 74.0 points per game, 49.0 f/g pct, 38.7 3-pt pct, 71.1 f/g pct. **Top Scorers:** Scottie James 18.1; Caleb Hounley 12.0; Lovell Cabell Jr. 11.5. **Rebounds:** James 8.5; Hounley 5.5; Avg team margin (plus-12.2). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.09):** James (3.2/2.4), 94 assists.

The Skinny: The Flames are back in the NCAA Tournament for the first time since 2013. All conference picks Homesley and Samardzija are team leaders. The Flames have won 10 of its last 50 all-time games. Liberty brings its own version of the pack line defense into the tournament which has fifth in the Southeastern Conference and lost to No. Tennessee in the conference tournament quarterfinals.

Record: 24-8. **Last 10:** 7-3. **Coach:** Williams.
Best Win: 77-72 at home to Duke on Feb. 26. **Worst Loss:** 62-63 at Penn State on Nov. 47.
Team Scoring: 74.0 points per game, 47.5 f/g pct, 39.4 3-pt pct, 75.8 f/g pct. **Top Scorers:** Nickell Alexander-Walker 18.0; Williams 14.7; Justin Robinson 13.7. **Rebounds:** Blackshear 7.7; Ty Outlaw 5.2; Avg team margin (plus-12.2). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.35):** Robinson (5.2/2.7), 109 assists.

The Skinny: The Hokies have been grinding through games without much help from their stars. They lost to Virginia Tech last January. They fought their way to six wins in their final 10 regular-season games. Williams is the only coach in the ACC with Terance Mann hit a wild off-balance runner with 18 seconds left in overtime. Williams' team is making progress.

Record: 23-12. **Last 10:** 10-2. **Coach:** Travis Ford.
Best Win: 66-64 at Seton Hall on Nov. 17. **Worst Loss:** 51-61 at home to Belmont on Nov. 30.

Team Scoring: 67.4 points per game, 41.9 f/g pct, 31.1 3-pt pct, 60.0 f/g pct. **Top Scorers:** Javian Beas 14.5; Trae Harris 13.6; Jordan Goodwin 13.4. **Rebounds:** Hasashin French 8.4; Goodwin 7.3; Avg team margin (plus-12.2). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.00):** Beas (3.7/2.9), 121 assists.

The Skinny: The Bulldogs finished tied for fifth in the Southeastern Conference and lost to No. Tennessee in the conference tournament quarterfinals.



Duke's RJ Barrett reacts after his dunk against Florida State in the championship game of the Atlantic Coast Conference tournament in Charlotte, N.C., on Saturday.

Blue stands out among champs

By BLAIR KERKHOFF
 The Kansas City Star

It's been suggested that seeding didn't help this year's conference tournament champions. Michigan State, which defeated Michigan on Sunday for the Big Ten title, is a second seed. SEC tournament champion Auburn is a No. 5 seed; Iowa State from the Big 12 is a No. 6.

It's possible none of those teams improved its seeding with its tourney run as March Madness neared.

But Duke's impressive ACC championship pushed the Blue Devils to the overall No. 1 seed.

Duke didn't win the ACC regular season. But the Blue Devils were without star freshman Zion Williamson for six games with a knee injury when he came out of his shoe in a Feb. 20 game against North Carolina.

With Williamson back at full strength, Duke topped the Tar Heels in the ACC semifinals and roared past Florida State in the championship game. In the tourney opener against Syracuse, Williamson made all 13 of his field-goal attempts and drew this praise from Orange coach Jim Boeheim: "I've been in this game over 50 years, and he can do things nobody has done in this game."

Duke, a No. 1 seed for the 14th time, bids for its sixth NCAA title and starts from a position of

strength.

Second-seeded Michigan State was terrific in winning the Big Ten tournament after navigating through a season of injuries.

Also in the East is SEC regular-season champion LSU, which will be coached by Tony Benford after Will Wade was indefinitely suspended.

Down-bracket intrigue finds No. 10 Minnesota, coached by Richard Pitino, taking on Louisville. Former Cardinals coach Rick Pitino, Richard's dad, is suing Louisville for \$44 million in a contract dispute.

Players to watch

This region is loaded. Along with Williamson, who is destined to be the overall top selection in the NBA Draft, are fellow freshman stars RJ Barrett and Cam Reddish. They're likely top five picks. Michigan State's Cassius Winston will show up on several All-America teams. The most intriguing player is 7-6, 310-pound center Tacko Fall of ninth-seeded Central Florida. He averages 10.9 points and 7.3 rebounds.

Upset special

No. 11 seed Belmont gets past Temple in the opening round and upsets sixth-seeded Maryland.

Winner

Duke over Michigan State

Team capsules

6 Maryland
Record: 22-10. **Last 10:** 8-5. **Coach:** Mark Turgeon.
Best Win: 70-55 at Penn State on Feb. 12. **Worst Loss:** 67-78 vs. Illinois on Jan. 26.
Team Scoring: 71.4 points per game, 45.7 f/g pct, 35.3 3-pt pct, 69.5 f/g pct. **Top Scorers:** Anthony Cowan Jr. 16.0; Bruno Fernando 13.7; Jalen Smith 11.1. **Rebounds:** Fernando 10.4; Smith 6.8. **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.00):** Cowan (3.6/2.9), 138 assists.

The Skinny: Losing to Nebraska in the Big Ten quarterfinals is an unsightly way to end the regular season, as was a late-season 17-point loss to Penn State, which means the Terrapins have lost three of four and four of seven.

Record: 26-5. **Last 10:** 9-1. **Coach:** Brian Wardle.
Best Win: 70-65 at Murray State on Jan. 24. **Worst Loss:** 92-100 at Green Bay on Dec. 1.
Team Scoring: 87.4 points per game, 49.9 f/g pct, 37.3 3-pt pct, 73.8 f/g pct. **Top Scorers:** David Windler 21.4; Kevin McClain 16.3; Nick Muszynski 14.8. **Rebounds:** Windler 10.7; Muszynski 5.5; Avg team margin (plus-3.8). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.71):** Grayson Murphy (6.6/2.5), 104 assists.

The Skinny: Belmont was undone in the Ohio Valley Conference championship game when Murray State star Ja Morant scored 22 of his 36 points in the second half. Belmont played without 6-foot-11 center Nick Muszynski, the OVC freshman of the year who averaged 14.9 points.

Record: 23-9. **Last 10:** 7-3. **Coach:** Dan Dunphy.
Best Win: 73-69 at home to Houston on Jan. 9. **Worst Loss:** 58-76 at Tulsa on Feb. 9.
Team Scoring: 73.9 points per game, 43.9 f/g pct, 33.1 3-pt pct, 71.0 f/g pct. **Top Scorers:** Shizz Alston Jr. 17.0; Quin Cook 15.7; Seymone Murray 13.3. **Rebounds:** Ernest Atkafu 17.0; Pierre-Louis 6.7; Avg team margin (plus-1.1). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (0.93):** Alston Jr. (5.0/2.6), 161 assists.

The Skinny: Quinton Rose and Shizz Alton gave Temple two good games. Alston averages 15.7 points per game. Rose 16.5 and Nate Pierre-Louis 13.5. The Owls average 44-percent shooting as a team, making an average per game of 44.9.

Record: 26-6. **Last 10:** 9-2. **Coach:** Will Wade.
Best Win: 73-71 at Kentucky on Feb. 19. **Worst Loss:** 77-90 vs. Oklahoma State on Nov. 25.
Team Scoring: 78.9 points per game, 46.2 f/g pct, 32.3 3-pt pct, 75.4 f/g pct. **Top Scorers:** Tremaine Swain 17.0; Will Wade 17.7; Seymone Murray 13.3. **Rebounds:** Reid 7.2; Kaveil Bybee-Williams 6.6; Avg team margin (plus-4.1). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (0.99):** Waters (5.9/3.6), 178 assists.

The Skinny: The ninth-ranked and regular-season SEC champions were bounced in the quarterfinals in Florida but managed to have lost coach Will Wade to suspension. Freshman guard Tremaine Swain was also suspended for 25 games after the SEC quarterfinal after meeting with NCAA investigators.

Record: 22-7. **Last 10:** 7-3. **Coach:** James Jones.
Best Win: 78-65 at home to Penn on Feb. 5. **Worst Loss:** 75-83 at home to Northumbria on March 2.
Team Scoring: 80.6 points per game, 49.4 f/g pct, 37.0 3-pt pct, 70.1 f/g pct. **Top Scorers:** Jordan Nwora 17.6; Alec Copeland 14.3; Blake Reynolds 11.3. **Rebounds:** Jordan Nwora 8.0; Oni 4.0; Avg team margin (plus-4.8). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.29):** Oni (3.6/2.6), 98 assists. **Last 10:** 7-3.

The Skinny: The Bulls opened two regular-season losses to archival Harvard in the league tournament. Copeland was the Ivy League tourney MVP after averaging 25 points against Harvard. Yale shot 60.4 percent in the title game and score at least 90 points for the eighth time in season.

Record: 23-13. **Last 10:** 7-3. **Coach:** Chris Mack.
Best Win: 80-69 at Northumbria on March 2. **Worst Loss:** 86-89 at Pittsburgh on Jan. 9.
Team Scoring: 78.9 points per game, 43.4 f/g pct, 34.2 3-pt pct, 77.5 f/g pct. **Top Scorers:** Jordan Nwora 17.2; Dwayne Sutton 10.2; Christen Cunningham 8.5. **Rebounds:** Nwora 7.5; Sutton 6.9; Avg team margin (plus-3.7). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.08):** Jordan Nwora 8.0; Oni 4.0; Avg team margin (plus-4.8). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.29):** Oni (3.6/2.6), 98 assists. **Last 10:** 7-3.

The Skinny: Louisville beat North Carolina by 19 on Jan. 12 in Champaign, Ill. Roy Williams' team lost as far as heels coach — using their size and length to disrupt shooters and control the glass.

Record: 21-13. **Last 10:** 8-5. **Coach:** Richard Pitino.
Best Win: 80-65 at Penn State on Feb. 12. **Worst Loss:** 68-95 at Illinois on Jan. 16.
Team Scoring: 71.4 points per game, 43.7 f/g pct, 32.1 3-pt pct, 67.9 f/g pct. **Top Scorers:** Amir Johnson 16.0; Jordan Murphy 14.8; Daniel Oturu 10.8. **Rebounds:** Murphy 10.7; Johnson 7.2; Avg team margin (plus-2.6). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.24):** Johnson (3.7/2.4), 105 assists.

The Skinny: The Gophers were in precarious position before winning twice in the Big Ten regular season. They also plateaued before getting blown out by Michigan in the semifinals 76-48. The quarterfinal win was over No. 13 Purdue. They also lost to No. 10 Michigan State in the quarterfinal.

Record: 28-6. **Last 10:** 10-2. **Coach:** Tom Izzo.
Best Win: 77-70 at Michigan on Feb. 24. **Worst Loss:** 74-77 at Michigan on Feb. 24. **Team Scoring:** 79.2 points per game, 48.8 f/g pct, 38.3 3-pt pct, 75.0 f/g pct. **Top Scorers:** Cassius Winston 19.0; Joshua Langford 15.0; J.J. Warren 14.4. **Rebounds:** Kenny Goins 7.0; Xavier Tillman 6.7; Avg team margin (plus-12.2). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.47):** Winston (5.2/2.9), 247 assists.

The Skinny: The Spartans have a winning record of 10 of 11, three of which came against in-state rival Michigan, including the championship game of the Big Ten tournament. A late game losing streak ended the season with a 19-point distant memory.

Record: 20-14. **Last 10:** 8-2. **Coach:** Brian Wardle.
Best Win: 70-65 at Murray State on Nov. 21. **Worst Loss:** 66-73 at home to Eastern Illinois on Nov. 10.

Team Scoring: 66.6 points per game, 43.4 f/g pct, 36.6 3-pt pct, 69.3 f/g pct. **Top Scorers:** Darrell Brown 14.7; Ellis Cline 13.6; Kierlan Kierlan 9.4. **Rebounds:** Childs 7.8; Dwayne Lantier-Gunleye 5.4; Avg team margin (plus-12.2). **Assist/Turnover Ratio (1.00):** Brown (3.7/2.4), 104 assists.

The Skinny: Belmont was undone in the MVC Tournament when they knocked out 2018 Final Four underdog drafting Loyola-Chicago in the semifinals and showed their season-long lack of chemistry when they came back in the second round to beat Northern Iowa for the title, their eighth victory when trailing at halftime.

SPORTS



Landmark victory

Kyle Busch matches Petty with 200th win » **Auto racing, Page 24**

NCAA TOURNAMENT

Stopping freshman phenom Williamson key to outdueling overall top seed Blue Devils

By EDDIE PELLIS
Associated Press

It's going to take more than a busted sneaker to stop Zion Williamson.

The way he's going, he might not be done until he's cutting down nets at the Final Four.

Impressed by how Duke is playing with college basketball's best player in the lineup, the NCAA selection committee made the Blue Devils the overall top seed for March Madness, perfectly in step with the oddsmakers, who had already established Duke as the 9-4 favorite to take it all.

The other 67 teams in the NCAA Tournament now have three weeks to figure out how to slow the 6-foot-7, 285-pound freshman who, many times this season, has appeared unstoppable.

"I think there's a verve when he's in there," Duke associate head coach John Scheyer said. "I think it's both ends. He's a guy who eliminates easy baskets and

he can get you some easy baskets."

Williamson led the Blue Devils to the Atlantic Coast Conference title and ended any doubt about his health, or his willingness to finish his season playing college ball before heading to the NBA. His status had been shaky since the Feb. 20 blowout of his Nike sent him tumbling to the ground, writhing in pain with a Grade 1 knee sprain.

Some said he'd be a fool to play another minute of college ball, given the millions awaiting him in the

SEE KEY ON PAGE 27

'Everyone's 0-0 now. We've just got to lock in on this tournament.'

Zion Williamson
Duke forward

He's the



Duke's Zion Williamson
NELL REDMOND/AP

No. 1 seeds



DUKE



VIRGINIA



UNC



GONZAGA

Inside:

- Virginia looking to avoid repeat of last year's early tourney exit, Page 30
- Complete NCAA bracket, Page 27

McIlroy holds on at Players Championship » Golf, Page 24

